



REFINC

**Increasing Participation of Refugees
in European schools**

**GOOD
PRACTICES
BOOKLET**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

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INTRODUCTION

The current educational landscape in Europe and beyond is increasingly diverse, with schools welcoming a growing number of refugee students seeking safety and stability. Teachers play a vital role in helping these students feel included, supported, and empowered to succeed academically and personally. This booklet of 30 good practices offers a foundation for educators who wish to enhance their approach to inclusion and make a positive impact in the lives of refugee students.

Developed through extensive research and real-world insights, this guide is the result of collaborative efforts by the consortium of the Erasmus+ project "Increasing Participation of Refugees in European Schools - REFINC," 2023-1-ES01-KA220-SCH-000166694. The booklet highlights best practices, skills, and tools that support an inclusive learning environment, focusing on practical methods such as interactive games and educational videos to create engaging and relatable lessons for students from various backgrounds. By implementing these practices, teachers can foster a classroom environment that not only embraces diversity but actively works to integrate every child into the learning process.

The practices outlined here are intended as a toolkit for teachers at both primary and secondary levels, providing clear, actionable steps that do not require extensive additional research. Our goal is to make it easier for educators to create inclusive, compassionate, and effective classrooms. This booklet serves as the first step in our comprehensive training program, and we hope it becomes a valuable resource as you work to build a better future for all students, regardless of their origins.

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REFINC

GOOD PRACTICES



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REFINC

I CULTURAL SENSITIVITY AND INCLUSION

**PRACTICES THAT FOSTER
UNDERSTANDING AND RESPECT FOR
DIVERSE CULTURES AND BACKGROUNDS**



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GOOD PRACTICE 1

Cultural Exchange and Buddy Program

Key words: *Cultural exchange, buddy system, refugee integration, inclusion*

Duration: Ongoing throughout the school year

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Training for teachers on cultural sensitivity
- Training for teachers, refugee students and their buddies on intercultural communication and conflict resolution.
- Development of cultural exchange curriculum
- Identification of student buddies and training
- Materials for cultural activities (e.g., traditional crafts, foods, and music)
- Optional: Recruit and train volunteer tutors (teachers, older students, community members)

Overview of the practice:

The Cultural Exchange and Buddy Program aims to integrate refugee students into the school community through a structured buddy system paired with cultural exchange activities. Each refugee student is paired with a local student "buddy" who helps them navigate the school environment, assists with language learning, and offers social support. Additionally, the program includes regular cultural exchange events where students share aspects of their own cultures, such as traditional foods, music, and stories.

Objectives:

- Enhance mutual understanding and respect among students from different cultural backgrounds.
- Facilitate language acquisition and social integration of refugee students.
- Create a supportive and inclusive school environment.

GOOD PRACTICE 1

Cultural Exchange and Buddy Program

Implementation:

1. **Teacher Training:** Conduct workshops on cultural sensitivity and inclusion for all teachers.
2. **Buddy Pairing:** Pair refugee students with local students based on common interests and language skills.
3. **Cultural Activities:** Organize monthly cultural exchange events involving food, music, crafts, and storytelling. Involve the families in these activities.
4. **Monitoring and Support:** Regularly check in with buddies and refugee students to address any challenges and provide additional support as needed.

The practice could be also implemented with trained tutors, in which case the training for tutors should be done in a preparation phase.

Benefits for teachers/students:

- Teachers gain skills in cultural sensitivity and inclusive education.
- Refugee students receive personalised support and easier adaptation to the new environment.
- Local students develop empathy, leadership skills, and cross-cultural understanding.

Main challenges:

Potential language barriers between refugee students and their buddies.
Initial resistance or discomfort from some students or parents.
Ensuring the consistency and commitment of buddy pairs over time.

GOOD PRACTICE 1

Cultural Exchange and Buddy Program

Strategies to Overcome Challenges:

- Provide additional language support resources.
- Engage parents through informational sessions and involve them in cultural events.
- Establish a support system for buddies, including regular check-ins and feedback sessions.

In the version with trained tutors, challenges might be:

- Finding qualified tutors:
- Ensure tutors have subject matter expertise and cultural sensitivity.
- Coordinating schedules: Match students and tutors with compatible availability.

Key findings:

The practice significantly improves refugee students' academic performance, social integration, and language skills. It also fosters a more inclusive school environment, enhancing overall well-being and mutual respect among all students.

Research consistently shows that tutoring and mentoring programs can significantly improve academic outcomes for refugee students, particularly in areas like literacy and numeracy.

Links to resources:

[UNHCR Education Resources](#)

[Intercultural Education Resources](#)

[National Center for Learning Disabilities](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 1.2

Cultural Exchange and Buddy Program

We are providing here another version of this practice with some additional resources.

Duration: 9 pilot sessions: 15 days each

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

Preliminary materials and information is given on NEW ABC project website, organized into 9 pilot testing sessions:
<https://newabc.eu/project/approach/>

Overview of the practice:

The school environment is a fundamental integrative social context, and it is our belief that it is important to involve the host community in the integrative processes of migrants. The mentoring program relies on a participative methodology, in which school relevant actors (as teachers, parents' associations and, mainly, pupils) will be involved in planning processes (e.g. peer mentoring relationships between Portuguese and migrant youngsters) and activities (collective events, training activities) that turn easier migrant pupils' integrative process.

The aim of this pilot action is to directly respond to refugee and migrant youngsters' needs regarding the lack of integration in the school environment, and simultaneously, will raise awareness on school actors about their role and responsibility for contributing to migrant pupils' integration in the school.

The aim of this program is to create a social and emotional support network for these migrants in the school environment, ruled by the respect of some relevant values – democracy, solidarity, freedom, – that guarantees the development of migrants' autonomy, trust in the school institution and wellbeing, and the support for intercultural exchange.

GOOD PRACTICE 1.2

Cultural Exchange and Buddy Program

Throughout the pilot action, both migrant and non-migrant young people, as well as parents' associations and teachers will participate in the planning of activities and will be encouraged to reflect on their role in the migrants' integration process. Training sessions and reflexive meetings will contribute to developing these actors' social and civic responsibility, empathy skills and adherence to multicultural values. The methodology of this program predicts that these school actors will gain more and more autonomy throughout the program, being able to perpetuate its existence in the future (sustainability of the program).

This pilot will contribute to address some or all of the following objectives:

- To create an environment where migrant young people can be welcomed and feel secure to express themselves.
- To promote school environments and involve all the school community in the integration process of migrant pupils.
- To raise awareness in the local institutions (namely schools) about their responsibility in actively contributing to the integrative process of migrant pupils.
- To promote institutions' autonomy to continue with this program in the future.

NEW ABC will deliver nine real-life pilots (check them below) for the inclusion of immigrant children and youth in education that will be co-designed by the partners and the stakeholders as examples of good practices that will be tested in the nine countries involved in the project. A platform will be created to provide a virtual space to share, discuss and comment on the co-design as well as the assessment and evaluation of the pre-implementation and post-implementation process of the pilots.

GOOD PRACTICE 1.2

Cultural Exchange and Buddy Program

Benefits for teachers/students:

Through the Participatory Action Research model, stakeholders and the community/society at large will be empowered and will continue to make their voices heard, taking responsibility for future actions and making visible both their needs and the solutions created jointly to policymakers and decision-makers.

Main challenges:

Main challenges will be the organization and implementation of a long-term approach, with 9 pilot sessions, and the engagement it requires from the participants in long periods.

Key findings:

The New ABC project focuses on producing a range of innovative and effective actions towards the educational, cultural and social inclusion and well-being of immigrant children and youth through co-creative and participatory approaches. In order to achieve this goal in a sustainable way, one major aim has to do with testing the adaptability and scalability of the pilot actions in different project countries to ascertain their replicability in different contexts during and after the end of the project.

All nine activity-based pilot actions that encompass the project have been designed with potential for replication, and should therefore be adaptable to pursue similar objectives in varying conditions and situations.

Links to resources:

[Mentorship for a better integration](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 2

Diversity and Tolerance Workshop

Key words: Diversity, Tolerance, Inclusion, EU Policies, Interactive Learning

Duration: 120 minutes workshop

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Projector and computer for presentation
- Notebooks and pens for participants

Overview of the practice:

Interactive Group Activity (30 mins):

Scenario 1: Language Barrier in Class Fatima, a new student, struggles with lessons due to limited English.

Discussion Points:

- How can the teacher and students support Fatima?
- What strategies can improve communication?

Scenario 2: Cultural Misunderstanding During a School Event John unintentionally offends Amina with a comment about her traditional dress.

Discussion Points:

- How should the teacher resolve the misunderstanding?
- What steps can educate students about cultural sensitivity?

Scenario 3: Inclusive Group Work A group project on world cultures excludes Ling, not valuing her input.

Discussion Points:

- How can the teacher encourage inclusive collaboration?
- What measures ensure all students' voices are heard?

GOOD PRACTICE 2

Diversity and Tolerance Workshop

Scenario 4: Observance of Religious Holidays Sara misses a test due to a religious holiday, affecting her grades.

Discussion Points:

- How can the teacher accommodate Sara's religious observance?
- What approach can the school take to respect diverse religious observances?

Role-Playing Exercise (40 mins):

Scenario 1: Language Barrier in the Classroom

Role 1: Emma - English-speaking student

Role 2: Maria - Spanish-speaking student with limited English

Scenario: Emma and Maria struggle to understand each other.

Scenario 2: Cultural Differences in Classroom Etiquette

Role 1: David - Reserved Asian student

Role 2: Leila - Assertive European student

Scenario: David and Leila's differing communication styles cause tension.

Scenario 3: Religious Observance Conflict

Role 1: Aisha - Observing Ramadan

Role 2: Mark - Unaware of Aisha's practices

Scenario: Aisha feels uncomfortable during a class lunch, and Mark insists she join.

Q&A and Wrap-Up (10 mins): Conclude with a Q&A session, summarizing key takeaways and distributing handouts on cultural sensitivity and inclusion in education.

GOOD PRACTICE 2

Diversity and Tolerance Workshop

Benefits for teachers/students:

Participants gain practical knowledge of EU policies on tolerance and diversity, experience empathy through interactive activities, and learn strategies to apply these principles in educational contexts

Main challenges:

Ensuring participant engagement, adapting materials to diverse audiences, and translating policy knowledge into practical action in classrooms.

Key findings:

Workshops that combine policy overview, interactive learning, and practical application can effectively enhance participants' understanding and implementation of tolerance and diversity principles in education.

Links to resources:

[Education Policies And Practices To Foster Tolerance, Respect For Diversity And Civic Responsibility In Children And Young People In The Eu](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 3

KS3 PSHE: Seeking Refuge - Real life stories of young people fleeing their homelands

Key words: *Understanding, life stories, identity, perception*

Duration: The activity can be done in many ways, and so change the duration: simply watching and discussing the films, add dynamics to pre and post watching (writings, questions, interviews, debates, pictures...) or, to make it complete and significant, create with our pupils a short film, using our refugee pupil's story and making the rest of the school aware of their reality (the film can be uploaded to the school's TV or YouTube Channel). For this, we can invite other refugees we know in our town or neighbourhood and make them part of the project.

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Device to watch films, cameras (phones) to record our own one, video editing software.

Overview of the practice:

Before starting, teachers should care about the content of each film, as they contain elements which some children might find upsetting, so it is essential to establish a safe teaching and learning environment before class viewing. Special care will be taken with our refugee pupils, making sure they are ready to watch these videos and share their experience. There may also be pupils who are not themselves refugees but have experienced upheavals and separation from home or family.

GOOD PRACTICE 3

KS3 PSHE: Seeking Refuge - Real life stories of young people fleeing their homelands

Previous activities:

- Before showing the films, build in time to find out the background to the situation in the countries featured so that pupils have a context
- Ask pupils why people become refugees, or what they know already about refugees, and collate their responses, for example, on a graffiti wall. Keep the wall to refer back to during future discussion.
- Explain that a key reason for people seeking asylum is because they are persecuted (denied basic rights) based on their gender, sexuality, race, religion, nationality or because they belong to a particular social group or have particular political opinions that conflict with the politics of government.
- Other reasons for people fleeing from their countries are due to war, or ethnic or political violence.

Continuum line:

- Create an imaginary line across the classroom and label the ends Strongly agree and Strongly disagree. Read out some statements such as the examples below, and ask pupils to place themselves on the line depending on the strength of their response to these. After viewing the films, do the activity again with the same statements to see if pupils place themselves differently.
 - o Anyone should be allowed entry to the UK if they are escaping from war, famine or persecution related to their race, religion, gender, sexuality or nationality
 - o No refugees should be allowed to enter the UK

GOOD PRACTICE 3

KS3 PSHE: Seeking Refuge - Real life stories of young people fleeing their homelands

Additional activities:

- creative writing
- art projects
- role-playing exercises based on the stories

Benefits for teachers/students:

ICTs are always a motivating way of introducing contents to our students. Apart from this, it can be an easier way to let our refugee pupils start sharing their story. If they first learn about other children who have experienced the same as them, and also see the effect these films cause in their peers, telling them about their reality will be easier and more natural.

Regarding academic issues, the activity works on many different subject contents: language, social studies...

Main challenges:

Our pupils may know little or nothing about the topic: this can be seen as a challenge or difficulty, but also a way to set a common start for all of them and raise awareness and empathy with their new classmate and their situation.

Apart from that, we must wait until the moment our new pupil is ready to share his or her story and work on it to show the rest of their peers the reality of refugees.

GOOD PRACTICE 3

KS3 PSHE: Seeking Refuge - Real life stories of young people fleeing their homelands

Key findings:

As said before, the practice will benefit refugee students in many ways, being the most important of it the opportunity to work on a project with their peers, getting to know how the school and his new class work, being part of a working team, explaining their reality and, maybe, meeting other pupils with similar life characteristics.

Links to resources:

[Films and didactic guide](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 4: **Building Bridges: Refugee Inclusion Activities for School Engagement**

Key words: *Refugee inclusion, diversity, team-building*

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Pictures/posters of diverse themes (landscapes, fruits, sports)
- Scotch tape
- Cell phones with cameras
- Space for walking and grouping
- Papers and pens for participants

Overview of the practice:

- Arrange the classroom or activity space to allow free movement and interaction. Clear a central area for walking and group activities.
- Select and display various images, posters, or objects representing different themes (like landscapes, fruits, sweets, and sports) around the room.
- Briefly introduce the purpose of the activity, emphasizing inclusivity, understanding, and team-building.
- Explain that the activity is designed to help students get to know each other better, regardless of their backgrounds.
- Ask students to walk around the space and interact non-verbally with each other, using gestures, facial expressions, or simple actions.
- After a few minutes, instruct students to gather around the image, poster, or object they like the most. This helps form groups based on common interests.

GOOD PRACTICE 4:

Building Bridges: Refugee Inclusion Activities for School Engagement

- In their new groups, students should create a collective representation (like a pose or tableau) that reflects their chosen theme and make a photo of the group.
- Each group presents their representation to the class, fostering a shared understanding and appreciation of different interests.
- Then divide students into pairs, ensuring everyone has a partner. If someone is left without a partner, a teacher or facilitator should pair up with them.
- In pairs, students take turns to share about themselves, focusing on two things they like or enjoy. They may use paper and pen to write down what they have learned about each other.
- After sharing, each student introduces their partner to the group, pretending to be them. This activity helps build empathy and understanding by seeing oneself through another's perspective.
- Conclude the activity with a group reflection, discussing what was learned about each other and how despite differences, everyone can connect and support one another.
- Highlight the importance of inclusivity and respect in the classroom, especially for integrating refugee students into the school community.

Benefits for teachers/students:

This activity helps teachers understand students' diverse backgrounds, enhancing empathy and classroom dynamics. Students build interpersonal skills, confidence, and a sense of belonging, crucial for refugee integration. It fosters a supportive, inclusive environment, promoting mutual respect and understanding among all students.

GOOD PRACTICE 4: **Building Bridges: Refugee Inclusion Activities for School Engagement**

Main challenges:

Obstacles may include language barriers, cultural differences, and reluctance from students to participate. Strategies to overcome these include using visual aids and translators, creating culturally sensitive materials, and ensuring activities are accessible and engaging for all students. Building a supportive community among teachers and students is crucial for successful integration and fostering a welcoming environment for refugee students.

Key findings:

The practice enhances social integration and language skills, fostering a sense of belonging for refugee students. Engaging in interactive activities boosts their confidence, academic performance, and well-being by providing a supportive, inclusive environment. This positive school experience is crucial for their overall development and successful integration into the community.

Links to resources:

[How to receive refugees in the classroom](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 5

Lens of Diversity

Key words: *Cultural exchange, collaboration, diversity*

Duration: 120 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Flipchart paper and markers for brainstorming sessions Digital cameras or smartphones with camera capabilities (one per group or student, depending on availability)
- Paper, glue, scissors, poster boards and pens
- Printed images representing diverse cultures (optional)
- Projector and screen (optional)

Overview of the practice:

"Lens of Diversity" is a hands-on workshop designed to encourage teenage students to explore and celebrate cultural diversity through photography. Participants will learn basic photography techniques, engage in a guided photo scavenger hunt focused on cultural elements, and collaborate to create a visual collage showcasing their diverse perspectives. Main objectives of this workshop include promoting cross-cultural understanding and appreciation among teenage students through photography as well as encouraging collaboration and teamwork in capturing and representing cultural diversity.

1. Photo Scavenger Hunt (45 minutes):

- Divide students into small groups and provide each group with a list of cultural elements or themes to photograph (e.g., traditional food, clothing, architecture, symbols).

GOOD PRACTICE 5

Lens of Diversity

- Students use digital cameras or smartphones to explore the school campus or surrounding community, capturing images that represent the assigned themes.
- Encourage students to think creatively and experiment with different angles and perspectives while taking photos.

2. Reflection and Sharing (30 minutes):

- After completing the photo scavenger hunt, reconvene as a group and allow each group to share their photos with the rest of the students.
- Facilitate a discussion about the significance of the captured images and the cultural diversity they represent.
- Encourage students to reflect on their own cultural backgrounds and the cultural elements that resonate with them personally.

3. Collaborative Visual Collage (30 minutes):

- Using printed copies of the photos taken during the scavenger hunt, students collaborate to create a visual collage showcasing the diversity of cultural elements captured.
- Provide art supplies such as glue, scissors, and poster board to facilitate the collage-making process.
- Encourage participants to arrange the photos in a visually appealing and meaningful way, incorporating their reflections and insights from the earlier discussion

4. Closing Activity: Cultural Reflections (15 minutes):

- To conclude the workshop, invite participants to gather in a circle and take turns sharing one thing they learned or appreciated about cultural diversity during the workshop.

GOOD PRACTICE 5

Lens of Diversity

- Encourage participants to express their thoughts and feelings openly, creating a supportive and inclusive atmosphere for sharing.
- Facilitate a brief discussion about the importance of cultural understanding and collaboration in building a more inclusive and empathetic school community.
- Conclude the workshop by thanking participants for their participation and contributions, emphasizing the value of their perspectives and experiences in promoting cultural diversity and mutual respect.

Benefits for teachers/students:

The workshop promotes teamwork and collaboration among participants, leading to the creation of a visually impactful representation of cultural diversity. Participants develop photography skills and artistic expression while gaining a deeper appreciation for cultural diversity. Teachers have the opportunity to facilitate meaningful discussions about cultural understanding and collaboration, fostering a more inclusive and empathetic school environment.

Main challenges:

The main difficulty may be ensuring access to an adequate number of digital cameras or smartphones for all participants. Another problem may be addressing potential language barriers and cultural sensitivities during the photo scavenger hunt and collaborative collage-making process. An important thing is managing time effectively to allow for meaningful photo-taking, reflection, and collaboration within the 2-hour timeframe.

GOOD PRACTICE 5

Lens of Diversity

Key findings:

The workshop provides a creative and engaging platform for teenage students to explore and celebrate cultural diversity through photography. The collaborative visual collage serves as a tangible representation of the shared experiences and perspectives of the participants, promoting cross-cultural understanding and collaboration within the school community. Students develop photography skills, artistic expression, and teamwork abilities while gaining a deeper understanding and appreciation for cultural differences.

GOOD PRACTICE 6

Teacher's Manual: “Not just Numbers”

TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN EUROPE

Key words: *Migration; asylum; safe space to discuss migration*

Duration: DVD + Exercises: 50min + 90min + 30min (depending on the organization of the sessions)

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- DVD reader / projector
- Printed materials from the Toolkit

Overview of the practice:

“Not Just Numbers” is a teachers' toolkit on migration and asylum in the European Union designed to help teachers and other educators engage young people in informed discussions on this subject. It is suitable for young people aged between 12 and 18.

The social and political importance of migration and asylum issues has grown steadily over the last two decades, during which the world has witnessed an increase in the movement of migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. At the same time, problems of discrimination, xenophobia and racism continue to emerge, often causing tensions in communities.

As European societies become more multicultural, it is essential to become aware of the main reasons that incite or force people to leave their countries. Understanding this phenomenon can help promote respect for diversity and encourage social cohesion.

GOOD PRACTICE 6

Teacher's Manual: “Not just Numbers”

TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN EUROPE

In particular, more information needs to be disseminated to young people, who are tomorrow's political decision-makers, but whose opinions on migration and asylum are not always based on factual and objective information.

For this reason, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) have teamed up to develop and publicise this new teaching toolkit, which encourages open and informed debate on these critical and complex issues.

This toolkit includes a DVD with films and portraits, creative exercises, and a manual for teachers, all designed to engage young people aged 12 to 18 in informed discussions about migration and asylum.

The overall objectives are to improve understanding of migration issues, promote respect for diversity and encourage social cohesion. Implementation involves watching films, carrying out group exercises, and classroom debates, adjusting the complexity and depth of the activities to the age group of the students.

Benefits for teachers/students:

For teachers, the toolkit offers a ready-made and structured resource for tackling a complex and topical subject, giving them the flexibility to adapt the activities to the needs and context of their class.

GOOD PRACTICE 6

Teacher's Manual: “Not just Numbers”

TOOLKIT FOR EDUCATIONAL MIGRATION AND ASYLUM IN EUROPE

For students, it promotes a deeper and more personal understanding of migrants and refugees, breaking down stereotypes and building empathy through real stories and participatory activities.

Main challenges:

One of the main challenges is the sensitivity of the topic, which can touch on personal issues for some students or provoke strong emotional reactions.

Another challenge is ensuring a balanced and respectful discussion in the classroom, especially with differing opinions. In addition, it can be difficult for some teachers to approach the topic due to a possible lack of experience or training on migration and asylum issues.

Key findings:

The "Teacher's Toolkit: It's not just numbers" is an exemplary practice for promoting a holistic and humanised understanding of migration and asylum issues among young people.

By combining factual education with personal experiences and interactive activities, the toolkit facilitates meaningful learning and promotes values of inclusion and respect for diversity. The successful implementation of this programme in schools can significantly contribute to building more cohesive and welcoming societies for all.

Links to resources:

[Manual do Professor](#) (in Portuguese)

GOOD PRACTICE 7

Living Legends and Myths

Key words:

Cultural diversity, integration, class activity, refugee awareness

Duration: 45 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Basic stationery, paper, pens, pencils, crayons

Overview of the practice:

Participants work in groups of 3 or 4 (works best for max. 5 groups). Each group chooses a legend or myth popular in their region. It can be either a very local story heard at home or a popular tale. The task of each group is to present it in an artistic form (e.g., drawing) or descriptive form. The technique will depend on the age as well as the language abilities of the participants. Time: 20 minutes. Then each group presents their legend to the other participants, followed by a discussion led by the teacher about the story. Time: 20 minutes.

- Why is this story important?
- Is this story known only locally, or does it have a multicultural dimension?
- What universal conclusions can be drawn from it?
- Could any aspect of this story be helpful in the experiences of refugees, such as living in a foreign country, encountering bad people, making friendships, etc.?"

The overarching goal of this exercise is to explore cultural similarities and differences between refugees and the participants who host them. It fosters understanding between different cultures.

GOOD PRACTICE 7

Living Legends and Myths

Benefits for teachers/students:

- Participants actively engage in collaborative learning activities. Students get to know the local culture as well as the culture of refugees, which leads to reducing differences and divisions and better mutual understanding. Cognitive aspects are also important; by learning about different myths and legends, students enrich their knowledge of the world.

Main challenges:

- For refugees, a language barrier may be an obstacle, making the second part of the exercise, which involves discussion, more challenging. In this case, assistance from the teacher will be needed. As for the first part of the exercise, selecting an appropriate technique will facilitate this task.
- The discussion about memories related to the necessity of leaving one's home country should take place calmly and thoughtfully, so as not to unnecessarily evoke negative emotions.

Key findings:

- Mutual understanding and familiarisation of cultures are among the key factors influencing effective adaptation to a new environment. On the other hand, for refugees sharing their own stories, it's an opportunity to present themselves and their country to their new colleagues, but also to maintain their own connection with their homeland. Leading this discussion and exchanging experiences on equal terms deepens inclusivity, diversity, and positively impacts relationships within the group of students.

Links to resources:

[Creative Expression Workshops for Immigrant and Refugee Children](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 8

Cultural Orientation and Adaptation Workshops

Key words: *Cultural adaptation, orientation, community engagement, intercultural exchange*

Duration: Initial intensive workshops followed by monthly sessions

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Orientation guides,
- cultural exchange activities,
- interpreters,
- educational materials about local culture, and partnership with local cultural organizations.

Overview of the practice:

The workshops aim to familiarize refugee students with the local culture, norms, and school environment, helping them to adapt more smoothly. Objectives include easing the transition into a new educational system, reducing cultural shock, and promoting mutual understanding and respect among students. Activities involve interactive sessions that cover aspects of daily life, school routines, and local customs, as well as cultural exchange programs where students share their own cultures. Community involvement is encouraged to create a welcoming atmosphere. Implementation steps include initial cultural assessments, development of tailored workshop content, ongoing feedback collection, and periodic updates to the program based on participant needs.

GOOD PRACTICE 8

Cultural Orientation and Adaptation Workshops

Main challenges:

Overcoming Cultural Misunderstandings: Encourage open communication and provide opportunities for dialogue to address and resolve misunderstandings.

Engaging Parents: Offer workshops and resources in multiple languages to involve parents in the cultural adaptation process.

Sustaining Interest: Vary workshop formats, incorporate guest speakers, and connect activities to real-life experiences to maintain engagement.

Key findings:

The practice has enhanced cultural awareness, facilitated smoother integration into school life, and strengthened community bonds.

Students report a better understanding of local customs and feel more confident in navigating their new environment.

Links to resources::

[Lah Janez pdf](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 8

Cultural Orientation and Adaptation Workshops

The practice of Cultural Orientation and Adaptation Workshops aims to facilitate the integration of refugee students into a new cultural and educational environment. Here's a more elaborate explanation of the practice:

Objectives:

- Familiarize refugee students with local customs, norms, and social expectations.
- Ease the transition into a new school system and reduce culture shock.
- Foster mutual understanding and respect between refugee and local students.
- Enhance cultural awareness among teachers and staff.

Implementation:

1. Initial Assessment: Conduct a needs assessment to understand the cultural backgrounds and specific challenges faced by refugee students.
2. Workshop Development: Design interactive workshops covering topics such as:
 - Daily life routines (shopping, transportation, healthcare)
 - School culture and expectations (rules, communication styles, academic norms)
 - Local customs and traditions
 - Intercultural communication and conflict resolution

GOOD PRACTICE 8

Cultural Orientation and Adaptation Workshops

3. Interactive Activities: Incorporate engaging activities like:

- Role-playing common social situations
- Group discussions and Q&A sessions
- Cultural exchange activities (sharing food, music, stories)
- Field trips to local cultural landmarks

4. Community Involvement: Partner with local cultural organizations, community leaders, and volunteers to provide authentic cultural experiences and support.

5. Ongoing Support: Offer monthly follow-up sessions to address ongoing challenges and reinforce cultural adaptation.

6. Feedback and Adaptation: Continuously collect feedback from participants to improve and tailor the workshops to their evolving needs.

Benefits for teachers/students:

For Teachers: Gain cultural competence and strategies to effectively support refugee students in the classroom.

For Students: Develop the skills and knowledge necessary to navigate their new environment with confidence and reduce feelings of isolation.



REFINC

II SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

**APPROACHES THAT CATER TO REFUGEE
STUDENTS' PSYCHOLOGICAL AND
EMOTIONAL NEEDS**



**Co-funded by
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GOOD PRACTICE 9

Strength Within

Key words: *Resilience, coping skills, trauma, refugee support*

Duration: 45 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Flipchart or whiteboard
- Markers
- Small slips of paper
- A bowl
- Pens/pencils

Overview of the practice:

Introduction (10 minutes)

The facilitator introduces the workshop topic and explains the importance of resilience and coping skills for refugee students. The facilitator leads a brief discussion about what resilience means and why it is essential for overcoming challenges. This introduction aims to set a positive tone and create a safe space for open discussion.

Strengths Reflection (15 minutes)

Each student receives a small slip of paper and writes down a personal strength or positive attribute they possess. Students fold their slips of paper and place them in a bowl. The facilitator reads each slip aloud, and students guess who wrote it. This activity fosters self-reflection and recognition of personal strengths. It helps students see their own value and the strengths of their peers, building a supportive community.

GOOD PRACTICE 9

Strength Within

Coping Strategies Brainstorm (15 minutes)

The facilitator leads a brainstorming session on coping strategies for dealing with stress, trauma, and adversity. Students contribute ideas and suggestions, which are recorded on a flipchart or whiteboard. The facilitator encourages students to share personal experiences of coping with challenges and what has helped them. This collaborative activity not only generates a list of practical strategies but also normalizes the sharing of personal struggles and successes.

Creative Expression (15 minutes)

Students are given the opportunity to express themselves creatively through art, writing, or movement. They can choose from various options, such as drawing, journaling, or dancing to explore their emotions and experiences in a safe and supportive environment. The facilitator provides prompts and guidance as needed, encouraging students to tap into their inner resources and express themselves authentically. This activity is designed to help students process their emotions and experiences in a non-verbal and therapeutic way.

Summary (10 minutes)

Arrange the participants in a circle, ensuring everyone has a clear view of one another. Select an object (e.g., a small stone or a soft toy) to serve as the "talking piece." The facilitator begins by holding the talking piece and shares a brief reflection on the workshop experience. The facilitator then passes the talking piece to the person on their left, who shares their reflection. Each participant has the opportunity to speak uninterrupted while holding the talking piece. This closing activity provides a structured way for students to reflect on their learning, share their thoughts, and listen to others, reinforcing a sense of community and mutual support.

GOOD PRACTICE 9

Strength Within

Benefits for teachers/students:

The workshop provides a supportive space for students to share experiences, build self-awareness, and support one another. Students develop resilience and coping skills to navigate challenges effectively. Teachers gain insights into students' strengths and challenges, enabling them to better support their emotional well-being and academic success.

Main challenges:

The main challenge is ensuring that the workshop activities are inclusive and sensitive to the diverse experiences and backgrounds of refugee students. Another thing is addressing any language barriers or communication challenges that may arise during the workshop.

Key findings:

The workshop fosters a sense of community and mutual support among students, enhancing their overall well-being and academic success. Students should feel empowered and supported in developing resilience and coping skills. Teachers should observe increased self-awareness and emotional regulation skills among participating students, contributing to a positive school environment.

GOOD PRACTICE 10

See, Hear, Feel: 5-4-3-2-1

Key words:

Mindfulness, Anxiety Relief, Flashbacks, Focus, Sensory Awareness

Duration: 15 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- The script what to name (described below)

Overview of the practice:

Model the following script first aloud and then have the teen practice on their own aloud with you listening. You can restart and repeat until relaxed. If you or the teen becomes sleepy or drifty ... good, that is really the goal ... that signals relaxation, and it is okay to stop.

- Name five objects you see in the room, one at a time.
Example: I see the chair. I see the carpet. I see pens. I see books. I see the door.
- Name five sounds you hear.
Example: I hear footsteps. I hear the fan. I hear a bird. I hear a car horn. I hear my breathing.
- Name five feelings you are having right now.
Example: I feel tired. I feel warm. I feel anxious. I feel excited. I feel sad.
- Name 4 objects you see, 4 sounds you hear, and 4 things you feel.

GOOD PRACTICE 10

See, Hear, Feel: 5-4-3-2-1

- Name 3 objects you see, 3 sounds you hear, and 3 things you feel.
- Name 2 objects you see, 2 sounds you hear, and 2 things you feel.
- Name 1 object you see, 1 sound you hear, and 1 thing you feel.

Benefits for teachers/students:

The brain can only hold one thought at a time. By directing our thoughts toward sensory experiences and emotions, we can interrupt negative thought spirals and clear our minds for new streams of thoughts.

Main challenges:

Individuals may find it difficult to remain present and mindful when overwhelmed by intrusive thoughts or memories. Additionally, trauma survivors may experience heightened emotional reactivity, making it challenging to regulate emotions effectively.

Key findings:

Focusing their minds on the present moment can enhance concentration and cognitive performance, allowing students to absorb information more effectively and teachers to deliver content with clarity and precision. Mindfulness promotes emotional regulation, reducing stress and anxiety levels. Moreover, prioritizing the present moment promotes overall well-being, fostering a positive and supportive learning environment for all.

Links to resources:

Creative interventions for Challenging Children and Adolescents by Susan P. Epstein

[5-4-3-2-1 a simple exercise to calm the mind](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 11

Our Stories, our Art

Key words: *Empowerment, building connections, emotional expression*

Duration: 90 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Art supplies such as paper, markers, crayons, coloured pencils, paint, etc.
- Newspapers and magazines.
- Writing materials like notebooks and pens.

Overview of the practice:

This activity provides a structured yet flexible framework for refugee students to engage in creative expression, share their stories, and foster connections with their peers in a school setting.

- Explain the purpose of the activity: to explore and express their unique stories and refugee experiences through art. Emphasise the importance of respecting each other's stories.
- Ask each student to introduce themselves by sharing their name and drawing a symbol that represents them on a piece of paper; after everyone has finished, invite them to share their symbols and the stories behind them.
- Invite the students to create artwork that represents their journey to their current location. They can choose to depict scenes from their past or present.
- Encourage them to use a variety of artistic techniques and materials to express themselves, such as drawing, painting, collage, or mixed media.

GOOD PRACTICE 11

Our Stories, our Art

- After completing their artwork, provide time for the students to share their creations with the group. Encourage them to discuss the inspiration behind their artwork, the emotions they experienced while creating it, and any connections they see between their stories.
- Facilitate a supportive and respectful discussion where students can offer feedback and ask questions.

Benefits for teachers/students:

By promoting diversity, inclusion, and empathy, workshops like these contribute to a positive school culture where all students feel respected and supported. Students have the opportunity to express themselves creatively and share their unique stories and perspectives, which can enhance their self-esteem and sense of identity. Students also learn from each other's diverse backgrounds and experiences, promoting cultural understanding, empathy, and appreciation for diversity.

Main challenges:

Some students may have limited proficiency in the workshop's primary language, making communication and understanding instructions difficult. In such a case help from the teacher would be helpful.

It is worth noting that many refugee children have experienced trauma related to displacement, violence, or loss, which may surface during storytelling or creative activities, requiring sensitive handling by workshop facilitators.

GOOD PRACTICE 11

Our Stories, our Art

Key findings:

Both participants and facilitators gained a deeper understanding of the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of immigrant and refugee children, fostering empathy and appreciation for cultural diversity. Sharing personal stories and artwork in a supportive environment validated students' experiences and empowered them to embrace their cultural heritage and personal journeys. And engaging in creative expression and storytelling stimulated students' interest and engagement in learning, promoting academic success and well-being.

GOOD PRACTICE 12

Big Bird Grows Up

Key words: *Communication, Trust, Engagement, Selective-Mute*

Duration: 45 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Sticky notes or note cards
- Pens

Overview of the practice:

The primary goal of this activity is to encourage communication with a child who may be reluctant to engage in conversation.

Steps to Engage a Child in Conversation Using Sticky Notes

Initiate the Conversation:

- Write “How are you?” on a sticky note.
- Stick the note on the child's arm to catch their attention.

Encourage Interaction:

- Hand the child a few sticky notes and a pen.
- Say, “Write your answer on the note.”

Exchange Responses:

- The child will write their response on a sticky note and stick it on you.

Continue the Exchange:

- Keep the conversation going by responding to each other's notes.
- Enjoy the process as you both start to cover yourselves with sticky notes, which often leads to laughter and fun.

GOOD PRACTICE 12

Big Bird Grows Up

Benefits for teachers/students:

Initiating communication with a selectively mute child is not only the first step in breaking down barriers but also the foundation upon which strong teacher-child relationships can be built. By taking the initiative to engage with the child, teachers create opportunities for trust to develop and for the child to gradually feel more comfortable expressing themselves. As communication progresses, teachers can tailor their approach to suit the child's needs and preferences, fostering a sense of safety and understanding. Through patience, empathy, and consistent support, teachers can cultivate a relationship that empowers the child to communicate more freely and participate actively in their educational journey.

Main challenges:

Teachers can find themselves standing on their heads to get kids to open up and communicate, and therefore, this activity could be beneficial to them to approach the children that are not willing to communicate.

Key findings :

Communication is a fundamental tool for establishing rapport because it allows individuals to connect, understand, and relate to one another. Through effective communication, people can express their thoughts, feelings, and needs, fostering mutual understanding and trust. By engaging in meaningful dialogue, individuals can build rapport by demonstrating respect, openness, and authenticity. Communication enables the exchange of information, ideas, and emotions, creating a shared connection and sense of belonging.

Links to resources: [Creative interventions for Challenging Children and Adolescents by Susan P. Epstein](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 13

Caring Hearts Program: Comprehensive Emotional Support for Refugee Students

Key words:

Refugee support, emotional well-being, integration, resilience

Duration: Ongoing, with specific activities and assessments conducted throughout the school year.

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Dedicated counseling room,
- training materials for staff,
- peer support group guidelines,
- cultural exchange activity kits,
- collaboration with local mental health professionals.

Overview of the practice:

The Caring Hearts Program at Harmony International School is designed to address the unique psychological and emotional needs of refugee students. Our program aims to create a supportive environment where refugee students can feel safe, understood, and valued. The objectives include:

1. Emotional Support: Provide individualized counseling sessions to help students cope with trauma and build emotional resilience.
2. Social Integration: Facilitate peer support groups and cultural exchange activities to foster a sense of belonging and community.

GOOD PRACTICE 13

Caring Hearts Program: Comprehensive Emotional Support for Refugee Students

3. **Teacher Training:** Equip teachers with the skills and knowledge to support refugee students through professional development workshops focused on cultural sensitivity and trauma-informed practices.
4. **Parental Involvement:** Engage parents through workshops and regular communication to ensure a consistent support system at home and school.

Implementation:

1. **Individual Counseling:** Each refugee student is assigned a school counselor who conducts regular one-on-one sessions. These sessions focus on trauma processing, coping strategies, and emotional regulation.
2. **Peer Support Groups:** Weekly group meetings are held where refugee students can share their experiences and receive support from peers facing similar challenges. These sessions are guided by trained facilitators.
3. **Teacher Workshops:** Quarterly workshops are conducted for teachers to learn about cultural sensitivity, trauma-informed practices, and strategies to recognize and address emotional distress in students.
4. **Cultural Exchange Activities:** Monthly events are organized where refugee students can share their cultural heritage with their peers, promoting mutual understanding and respect.
5. **Parental Engagement:** Regular workshops and meetings with parents to discuss their children's progress, provide emotional support techniques, and foster a supportive home environment.

GOOD PRACTICE 13

Caring Hearts Program: Comprehensive Emotional Support for Refugee Students

Benefits for teachers/students:

Teachers gain a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by refugee students and learn effective strategies to support them. Refugee students benefit from personalized emotional support, improved social integration, and enhanced resilience, leading to better academic and personal outcomes.

Main challenges:

Potential challenges include language barriers, cultural differences, and limited resources for specialized support. Overcoming these challenges involves using interpreters, offering cultural competency training for staff, and seeking partnerships with local organizations for additional resources.

Key findings:

The Caring Hearts Program significantly improves refugee students' emotional well-being, social integration, and academic performance. Students develop stronger coping mechanisms, feel more connected to their school community, and show increased engagement and success in their studies.

Links to resources:

- [National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)
- [UNHCR - Educating Refugee Children](#)
- [European Resettlement Network](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 14

Safe Space Circles

Key words: *Trauma-informed care, emotional well-being, group support, safe space, empathy*

Duration: 45-minute sessions, once a week, facilitated by a trained counselor or teacher

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Designate a quiet and comfortable space for the circles.
- Gather simple comfort items (stress balls, fidget toys, blankets).
- Prepare open-ended questions or prompts to guide discussions.
- Establish clear guidelines for confidentiality and respect within the group.

Overview of the practice:

Safe Space Circles provide a structured environment for refugee students to share their experiences, feelings, and challenges in a supportive and non-judgmental setting. Each session involves:

- **Check-In:** Students share how they're feeling in the moment using a word, phrase, or visual representation.
- **Guided Discussion:** Facilitator poses questions or prompts related to emotions, coping strategies, or cultural adjustment.
- **Open Sharing:** Students voluntarily share experiences, thoughts, or questions related to the topic.
- **Affirmation and Support:** Group members offer encouragement, empathy, and validation to each other.
- **Check-Out:** Students reflect on what they've gained from the session and any takeaways for the week ahead.

GOOD PRACTICE 14

Safe Space Circles

[Additional exercises for the good practice](#)

[Online trainings available](#)

Benefits for teachers/students:

Teachers: Gain insight into students' emotional needs, create a more inclusive classroom climate, build rapport and trust with students.

Students: Develop emotional regulation skills, build resilience, reduce feelings of isolation, strengthen social connections, learn healthy coping mechanisms.

Main challenges:

- Building trust: Ensure students feel safe and comfortable sharing personal experiences.
- Managing disclosures: Be prepared to connect students with additional support resources as needed.
- Maintaining consistency: Ensure regular participation to establish routine and a sense of belonging.

Key findings:

Research demonstrates that group-based interventions like Safe Space Circles can significantly improve mental health outcomes for refugee youth, including reducing symptoms of PTSD, anxiety, and depression. Students also report feeling more connected to their peers and school community.

Links to resources:

[Research demonstrates that group-based interventions like Safe Space](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 15

Needful Things

Key words: *Empathy, trauma, refugee support*

Duration: 30 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Small sheets of paper (3 per student),
- pencils (for every student),
- crayons (optional)

Overview of the practice:

This activity uses discussion and diamond ranking to help students to understand what it is like to suddenly flee one's home.

- Start from the talk about migration, ask about the reasons why people move to live elsewhere.
- Get students into small groups (3 or 4) and give them pencils and sheets of paper.
- Ask them what would they take from home in case of emergency, if they have to flee. Students should draw or write them down.
- Ask everyone about their choice and explanation.
- Now working in groups, try to prioritise the items starting from the most important.
- Evaluate the result in each group. Helpful question:
 1. Are there any similarities or significant differences between groups?
 2. Were there any surprising items?
 3. What would they miss if they had to flee?
 4. Are there only practical things on the lists or some personal items as well?
 5. Would their parents take different things?

GOOD PRACTICE 15

Needful Things

Benefits for teachers/students:

The activity allows for a better understanding of the situation of refugees who had to hastily leave their homes. It fosters mutual understanding and empathy among students, highlighting the real problems that refugees have to face.

Main challenges:

Try to choose a reason for fleeing from home that is as easy to imagine and as interesting as possible for as many students as possible.

It is important to stress that there are no right and wrong answers when it comes to personal choice and preference, although there may be some choices that are wiser and more practical than others.

Key findings :

Discussion on key issues concerning refugees, fostering mutual bonds and understanding. Breaking barriers through better immersion in the refugees' situation.

Links to resources:

[Compass Manual for Human Rights Education with Young People](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 16

What Would the Lamp Say?

Key words: *Empathy, Creativity, Perspective*

Duration: 60-90 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Paper
- Pen or pencil

Overview of the practice:

The goal of this practice is to help the student gain a fresh perspective and to depersonalize the issue by viewing it through the lens of metaphorical objects, which can make it easier to discuss and address their feelings.

Engaging Teens in Metaphorical Thinking Using Everyday Objects

1. Identify Objects:

Ask the teen to look around the room and name at least 10 objects, such as a lamp, desk, book, mug, calendar, etc.

2. Document the Objects:

Write down the objects as the teen names them.

3. Introduce Metaphorical Thinking:

Ask the teen to consider what each of these objects might say about a specific problem or issue, imagining the perspective of each object.

If the teen struggles with the concept, provide a few examples to illustrate how to think metaphorically.

GOOD PRACTICE 16

What Would the Lamp Say?

Examples:

The lamp might say, “We need to shed more light on the problem.”

The book could say, “We need more information; keep looking deeper.”

The calendar might say, “Let’s consider how long this problem has been ongoing.”

Purpose of the Exercise

To elicit multiple, diverse perspectives in students, making problem solving fun and creative.

Benefits for teachers/students:

Use this activity when you have worked with the students on coping strategies to help improve a situation, but nothing seems to be working and the student is becoming more frustrated (for example, if a student says, “I have no friends.”).

Main challenges:

Obstacles such as language barriers, cultural disparities, and student reticence may arise. To address these challenges, employing translators and ensuring activity is engaging and supportive are essential strategies. Establishing a supportive community among both teachers and students is vital for successful integration and cultivating a welcoming atmosphere for refugee students.

Key findings :

The activity offers a valuable opportunity for the child to detach from the statements and consider them as if they were made by others. This allows them to gain perspective and view their situation from different angles.

Links to resources :

Creative interventions for Challenging Children and Adolescents by [Susan P. Epstein](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 17

Colors Of Home: Exploring Identity

Key words: *Identity, diversity, self-expression, cultural exploration*

Duration: 120 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Name tag materials (cardstock, markers, stickers, etc.)
- Collage materials (magazines, newspapers, fabric scraps, glue, scissors, etc.)
- Story stone materials (smooth stones or rocks, paint, markers, etc.)
- Painting materials (canvases, paints, brushes, palettes, etc.)

Overview of the practice:

This workshop provides immigrant and refugee students with an opportunity to explore and express their cultural identity, emotions, and experiences through various forms of art, fostering creativity, self-expression, and a sense of belonging in their new environment.

1. Icebreaker activity: "Name Tags with Meaning."

- Students create name tags using colorful markers and stickers, decorating them with symbols or images that represent their cultural background or personal interests.
- As they create their name tags, students share the significance of the symbols they've chosen with the group.

2. Collage Creation Activity:

- Students are provided with a variety of materials such as magazines, newspapers, fabric scraps, buttons, and beads.
- They create collages that reflect their cultural heritage, memories, or emotions, using the materials to convey their unique stories and experiences.

GOOD PRACTICE 17

Colors Of Home: Exploring Identity

3. Story Stones Activity:

Introduction to Story Stones:

- Facilitators introduce the concept of story stones, small stones or rocks decorated with symbols or images that represent stories or experiences.
- Students discuss the power of storytelling and the significance of symbols in their cultures.

Story Stone Creation:

- Students select stones from a collection provided by the facilitators and decorate them with paint, markers, or other art supplies.
- They create symbols or images on the stones that represent aspects of their cultural identity, values, or experiences.

Sharing Circle:

- Students gather in a circle and take turns sharing the stories behind their story stones with the group.
- They explain the significance of the symbols or images they've chosen and share personal memories associated with them.

4. Reflection and Closing:

Students gather in a circle and reflect on their artwork and experiences during the workshop. Facilitators lead a guided discussion, prompting students to share how they feel after expressing themselves through art and what they've learned about themselves and others. Facilitators encourage students to continue exploring and expressing their cultural identity through art in their daily lives.

GOOD PRACTICE 17

Colors Of Home: Exploring Identity

Benefits for teachers/students:

Through sharing stories, symbols, and experiences from their diverse cultural backgrounds, students gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of each other's heritage, fostering cross-cultural empathy and respect. Engaging in creative expression fosters a sense of empowerment among students, as they have the opportunity to share their voices, stories, and perspectives with others in the workshop. Teachers can incorporate innovative teaching strategies and art-based activities into their lesson plans, enhancing student engagement, motivation, and learning outcomes. By observing and participating in students' creative expression activities, teachers gain valuable insights into their students' cultural backgrounds, emotions, and perspectives, enabling them to better support their social and emotional needs.

Main challenges:

Students may have varying levels of proficiency in the workshop's language of instruction, which can hinder communication, understanding, and engagement in activities.

Engaging in storytelling and artistic expression may evoke intense emotions or traumatic memories for some students, requiring facilitators to create a safe and supportive environment and provide appropriate support and resources for emotional processing.

Some students may have limited exposure to or understanding of artistic concepts and techniques, requiring facilitators to provide clear instructions, demonstrations, and guidance to support their creative expression journey.

GOOD PRACTICE 17

Colors Of Home: Exploring Identity

Key findings :

The key findings of the workshop are its effectiveness in promoting cultural identity exploration, emotional expression, cross-cultural understanding, and community building among immigrant and refugee children in the school setting.

GOOD PRACTICE 18

"HeartSpaces: Nurturing Emotional Well-being and Resilience in Refugee Students"

Key words:

Trauma-informed care, social-emotional learning (SEL), mental health, resilience, safe space, empathy, cultural sensitivity.

Duration: Ongoing with dedicated weekly group sessions (45-60 minutes) and individual check-ins as needed.

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Designated quiet, comfortable space for group sessions and individual meetings.
- Soft seating, calming decor (plants, nature imagery), sensory items (stress balls, fidget toys).
- Age-appropriate SEL curriculum or resources addressing emotional regulation, coping skills, and building relationships.
- Training for staff on trauma-informed practices, cultural sensitivity, and recognizing signs of distress.
- Establish partnerships with mental health professionals for consultation and referrals.
- Additional guidelines: [Addition to the practice Heart Spaces](#)

Overview of the practice:

HeartSpaces is a holistic approach to fostering emotional well-being and resilience among refugee students.

The practice encompasses:

- **Safe and Supportive Environment:** Create a physically and emotionally safe space where students feel welcomed, valued, and understood.

GOOD PRACTICE 18

"HeartSpaces: Nurturing Emotional Well-being and Resilience in Refugee Students"

- **Structured Group Sessions:** Facilitate weekly group sessions that focus on specific SEL skills using evidence-based activities and discussions (e.g., identifying emotions, managing stress, building healthy relationships).
- **Individualized Check-Ins:** Provide regular one-on-one check-ins with students to assess their emotional state, offer support, and address individual needs.
- **Trauma-Informed Practices:** Employ strategies that acknowledge and address the impact of trauma on students' emotional and behavioral responses. This may include recognizing triggers, providing reassurance and predictability, and teaching coping skills.
- **Cultural Sensitivity:** Incorporate cultural understanding and awareness into all aspects of the practice, recognizing the unique experiences and strengths of each student.

Benefits for teachers/students:

Teachers:

- Develop a deeper understanding of the social-emotional needs of refugee students.
- Gain strategies for creating a trauma-sensitive and culturally responsive classroom environment.
- Strengthen relationships with students and build trust, leading to improved academic engagement.
- Identify students who may need additional support and facilitate referrals to mental health professionals.

GOOD PRACTICE 18

"HeartSpaces: Nurturing Emotional Well-being and Resilience in Refugee Students"

Students:

- Develop essential social-emotional skills, such as self-awareness, self-regulation, and empathy.
- Learn healthy coping mechanisms for managing stress, anxiety, and difficult emotions.
- Build resilience and confidence in navigating challenges.
- Feel more connected to their peers and school community.
- Experience improved mental health outcomes and overall well-being.

Main challenges:

- Overcoming stigma: Create a culture of openness and acceptance around mental health.
- Addressing language barriers: Provide interpretation and translation services as needed.
- Coordinating with mental health professionals: Establish clear referral pathways and communication channels.

Key findings:

Research has consistently shown the positive impact of social-emotional learning programs on refugee students' mental health, academic achievement, and overall well-being. HeartSpaces, with its focus on trauma-informed care and cultural sensitivity, addresses the unique needs of this population and creates a foundation for long-term success.

Links to resources:

- [Advancing SEL](#)
- [The National Child Traumatic Stress Network](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 19

Trauma-Informed Care Workshops

Key words: *Refugee students, trauma-informed care, mental health support, workshops, professional development*

Duration: One-time workshops followed by ongoing support, throughout all school year

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Facilitators/trainers, workshop materials, follow-up resources.
- Workshop materials (presentations, handouts, training manuals)
- Follow-up resources (guides, toolkits, contact information for support services)

Overview of the practice:

Trauma-informed care workshops are designed to educate teachers and staff about the unique needs of refugee students who may have experienced trauma.

Workshops cover topics such as recognizing trauma symptoms, creating safe and supportive environments, and implementing trauma-sensitive practices in the classroom.

Objectives include increasing awareness, improving support strategies, and enhancing communication with refugee students.

Results show improved understanding, increased empathy, and more effective support provision. Implementation involves scheduling workshops, providing follow-up resources, and integrating trauma-informed approaches into school policies and practices.

GOOD PRACTICE 19

Trauma-Informed Care Workshops

Implementation:

1. Preparation:

- Identify Facilitators: Recruit trainers with experience in trauma-informed care, preferably those who have worked with refugee populations.
- Develop Materials: Create comprehensive workshop materials including slides, handouts, and practical exercises.
- Schedule Workshops: Plan workshop sessions, ensuring they fit into the school calendar without disrupting regular activities.

2. Workshop Execution:

- Conduct Workshops: Facilitate interactive workshops that include presentations, group discussions, role-playing, and Q&A sessions.
- Engage Participants: Encourage active participation and provide opportunities for teachers to share their experiences and concerns.

3. Follow-up Support:

- Provide Resources: Distribute follow-up materials such as toolkits, guides, and lists of mental health support services.
- Ongoing Communication: Establish channels for continuous communication, such as regular check-ins, newsletters, and an online forum for educators to discuss challenges and solutions.
- Additional Training: Offer advanced workshops or refresher courses periodically to reinforce trauma-informed practices.

Benefits for teachers/students:

Benefits for teachers include enhanced professional skills, greater confidence in supporting refugee students, and improved classroom management. Refugee students benefit from increased understanding, reduced stigma, and improved access to mental health support.

GOOD PRACTICE 19

Trauma-Informed Care Workshops

Main challenges :

Challenges may include limited resources for training, resistance to change, and addressing the diverse needs of refugee students. Additionally, maintaining consistency and sustainability of trauma-informed practices can be challenging over time.

Key findings :

Key findings highlight the importance of trauma-informed approaches in creating supportive school environments and promoting the well-being of refugee students. Professional development plays a crucial role in equipping educators with the necessary skills and knowledge to effectively support traumatized students.

Links to resources :

[Child trauma toolkit for educators](#)

[Trauma and violence](#)

[About child trauma](#)



REFINC

III LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION

**EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES TO OVERCOME
LANGUAGE BARRIERS AND ENHANCE
COMMUNICATION**



**Co-funded by
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GOOD PRACTICE 20

Breaking Barriers: Communication Strategies For Success

Key words: *Communication, language barriers, inclusion, empowerment*

Duration: 120 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Flipchart paper and markers for brainstorming sessions

Overview of the practice:

This workshop provides refugee students with practical strategies and skills to overcome language barriers and enhance communication, empowering them to navigate various communication situations confidently within the school setting.

- Let's start from an icebreaking activity called "Language Relay".
Icebreaker activity: "Language Relay". Students form teams and engage in a relay race where they must convey a message through gestures, drawings, or limited vocabulary in a language they don't speak fluently. This activity highlights the challenges of language barriers and the importance of effective communication strategies.

- Language Exchange Circles Activity

Students gather in small groups and engage in language exchange circles, where they take turns teaching each other basic phrases and expressions in their native languages. Facilitators provide guidance and support as students practice speaking and listening in different languages, promoting mutual learning and cultural exchange.

GOOD PRACTICE 20

Breaking Barriers: Communication Strategies For Success

- Language Learning Games

Word Association: Students sit in a circle, and the facilitator starts by saying a word in the target language. The next student must say a word that is associated with the previous word, and the game continues around the circle. For example, if the first word is "cat," the next person might say "dog," and so on.

Charades: Students take turns acting out a word or phrase in the target language without speaking, while the rest of the group tries to guess what it is. This game helps reinforce vocabulary and encourages creativity in communication.

Create a Story: Divide students into teams and give each team a story prompt or sentence starter in the target language. One student from each team starts the story by saying one sentence in the target language, then passes it on to the next team member to add another sentence, and so on. The goal is to create a coherent story as a team.

- Real-Life Scenarios Activity

Students work in pairs or small groups to brainstorm and role-play real-life scenarios where effective communication strategies are needed, such as ordering food at a restaurant, participating in group discussions, or seeking assistance from school staff. Facilitators provide feedback and guidance as students practice applying the strategies they've learned in realistic contexts.

GOOD PRACTICE 20

Breaking Barriers: Communication Strategies For Success

- Summary and Closing

Facilitators summarize the key themes and strategies covered in the workshop, emphasizing the importance of effective communication skills in overcoming language barriers. They encourage students to continue practicing and applying the strategies they've learned in their daily lives. In the end students gather in a circle and reflect on their learning and experiences during the workshop, sharing insights, challenges, and commitments to improving their communication skills.

Benefits for teachers/students:

The workshop creates a supportive and inclusive learning environment where students and teachers collaborate to overcome language barriers and build strong communication skills essential for academic success and social integration.

Language learning games and activities provide opportunities for students to reinforce vocabulary, improve pronunciation, and develop their language proficiency in a fun and engaging way. Students gain practical strategies and skills to overcome language barriers and enhance their ability to communicate effectively in various contexts. Teachers gain insights into the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of their students through language exchange circles and storytelling activities, allowing them to create a more inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment.

GOOD PRACTICE 20

Breaking Barriers: Communication Strategies For Success

Main challenges:

Facilitators must be sensitive to cultural differences and communication norms among students, ensuring that activities and discussions are inclusive and respectful of diverse backgrounds. Keeping participants engaged and motivated throughout the workshop can be challenging, particularly for activities that require sustained attention and active participation.

Key findings :

The key findings from this workshop include increased awareness as students gain a deeper understanding of the language barriers faced by immigrant and refugee students and the impact of effective communication strategies on overcoming these barriers. Through language exchange circles and storytelling activities, students develop greater appreciation for the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of their peers, fostering mutual respect and understanding.

GOOD PRACTICE 21

The Giant Dolls' House Project

Key words: *Social arts project, home, community, dialogue*

Duration: The practice could be done during the first moments of the pupil at school, as it does not involve much speaking (in case they do not speak the same language as the hosting country). It can be done by the reception class and, if it becomes successful, do it with all the school and families who want to participate.

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Shoe boxes and recycled materials.
- Markers, brushes, paint and any other arts material.
- Alternative writing/speaking resources (AI, apps) could be used if they do not speak our language.

Overview of the practice:

It consists of on encouraging all of our pupils to share their life experience and sense of “home” through the creative construction of a dolls' house. Our refugee pupil will take the activity as the rest of the children or teens.

We will tell them to decorate their houses in a way that reflects their current experiences, emotions and surroundings, or something else that helps them find comfort. We can also set the starting question: “What does “home” mean to you?”

GOOD PRACTICE 21

The Giant Dolls' House Project

Afterwards, they will share their stories, memories, fears, experiences... In a comfortable environment. We will get to raise awareness of how important and different “homes” are for us, due to culture or life experiences. The main idea is that our pupils learn that no matter how different our homes are, they are part of us. Some of us have lost their home and we must help them create a new one, being friendly, patient, caring and helpful.

What does home mean to you? (learning aim: To reflect on what home means to us personally).

Ask your pupils to think about what home means to them. Possible discussion questions include: Is home just a building or a set of rooms, or is it something more than that? If so, what? For example, home might be associated with family and friends, the place we grew up, daily routines or a sense of belonging. How does your home make you feel? These feelings might be both positive and negative, particularly with the current context.

The shoe box houses can be linked with threads or wires and put in a visible place at school. Any of the school community members can join the idea and create their own dolls' house, explaining in a piece of paper their stories, as our pupils have done.

Other ideas:

It would be beneficial to involve the local community, inviting local artists or craftspeople to lead workshops, organizing community events around the dollhouse, or incorporating elements of local culture and history into its design, providing opportunities for the children to share their stories and experiences.

GOOD PRACTICE 21

The Giant Dolls' House Project

Benefits for teachers/students:

The main benefit is the opportunity refugee pupils get to explain how they feel and their previous reality to their classmates and teacher. Art will be the tool for communicating in both senses.

Our pupils will get to know their new partner's experience and adopt an empathetic, sensitive attitude towards them.

For the teacher(s), it will also be helpful to learn about their new pupils.

Main challenges:

We might assess the activity's implementation if discussing our new pupil's experience is premature. It can still be hard for them to share about their previous lives, especially after drastic or traumatic changes.

To help them feel supported, we suggest two options: first, find another pupil or school member who has faced something similar to share their story (with our new pupil as a listener). Alternatively, we can use pre-made didactic units (posters, videos, readings) before starting this "opening" activity. See links at the chart's end.

GOOD PRACTICE 21

The Giant Dolls' House Project

Key findings:

We believe sharing their experience will be a way of “letting go” and getting ready for a new start, apart from being aware of the help and care their new environment will bring to them. If they feel understood and comfortable, their academic performance will get better day by day and they will be able to show their strengths. In a social way, opening like this will make other pupils see if they have things in common, getting the opportunity to set bonds and make new friends..

Links to resources:

- [Project Giant doll's house](#)
- [Dollar Street](#) Developed by Gapminder: Dollar Street is an interactive online platform which uses photographs and statistics to provide a fascinating insight into the lives and homes of people all over the world. Explore what home is like elsewhere in the world, identify similarities and differences, and think about the inequalities that exist between and within countries.

GOOD PRACTICE 22

Multilingual Peer Tutoring Program

Key words: *Language support, peer tutoring, bilingual education, communication enhancement*

Duration: Throughout the academic year with weekly sessions

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Recruitment and training of bilingual peer tutors
- Development of tutoring materials and resources
- Scheduling coordination
- Classroom space and supplies

Overview of the practice:

The Multilingual Peer Tutoring Program is designed to support refugee students in overcoming language barriers by pairing them with bilingual peers who provide academic and linguistic assistance. The program leverages the skills of students who are fluent in both the host country's language and the refugee students' native languages, creating a supportive and relatable learning environment.

Objectives:

- Enhance language acquisition and academic performance of refugee students.
- Promote cross-cultural understanding and communication skills among all students.
- Provide refugee students with a supportive peer network.

GOOD PRACTICE 22

Multilingual Peer Tutoring Program

Implementation:

1. **Recruitment and Training:** Identify and recruit bilingual students to serve as peer tutors. Provide them with training on tutoring strategies, cultural sensitivity, and communication techniques.
2. **Tutoring Sessions:** Schedule regular tutoring sessions where peer tutors assist refugee students with homework, language practice, and subject-specific tutoring. These sessions can be held after school or during designated periods.
3. **Resource Development:** Create and distribute tutoring materials tailored to the needs of refugee students, including bilingual dictionaries, language learning apps, and subject-specific guides.
4. **Monitoring and Evaluation:** Regularly assess the progress of refugee students through feedback from tutors and academic performance tracking. Adjust the program as needed based on this feedback.

Benefits for teachers/students:

- Teachers receive additional support in helping refugee students understand the curriculum.
- Refugee students improve their language skills and academic performance.
- Peer tutors develop leadership skills, empathy, and cross-cultural communication abilities.

GOOD PRACTICE 22

Multilingual Peer Tutoring Program

Main challenges:

- Ensuring the availability and commitment of peer tutors.
- Addressing varying levels of language proficiency among refugee students.
- Maintaining consistent and effective communication between teachers, tutors, and students.

Strategies to Overcome Challenges:

- Implement a flexible scheduling system to accommodate tutors' availability.
- Provide ongoing training and resources to peer tutors.
- Facilitate regular check-ins and feedback sessions to address any issues promptly.

Key findings:

The practice leads to significant improvements in refugee students' language skills, academic performance, and social integration. Peer tutors also gain valuable skills and cultural insights, fostering a more inclusive school environment.

Links to resources:

- [MTB MLE RESOURCE KIT Including the Excluded: Promoting Multilingual Education](#)
- [UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning](#)
- [UNHCR - Language Learning for Refugees](#)
- [Reading Rockets on Cross-Age Tutoring and PALS](#)
- [Resilient Educator on High School Peer Tutoring Programs](#)
- [eCampus News on Starting a Peer Tutoring Program](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 23

"Language Mosaic: Building Communication Skills Through Multi-Modal Exploration"

Key words: *Language learning, multilingualism, visual aids, gestures, real-world communication, cultural context.*

Duration: Ongoing with regular integration into daily lessons and dedicated language practice sessions (30-45 minutes) 2-3 times per week.

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Visual aids: Pictures, diagrams, real objects, flashcards, posters, etc.
- Language learning materials: Textbooks, workbooks, online resources, language learning apps, etc.
- Technology: Computers, tablets, projectors, audio recordings, etc.
- Human resources: Interpreters, translators, language tutors, community volunteers, etc.
- Establish partnerships with language support services (interpreters, translators, language tutors).

Overview of the practice:

Language Mosaic is a multi-faceted approach to language learning that recognizes the importance of diverse communication strategies.

The practice involves:

- Visual Support: Incorporate visual aids into lessons to enhance comprehension and vocabulary acquisition. Use pictures, diagrams, real objects, and gestures to illustrate key concepts and vocabulary.

GOOD PRACTICE 23

"Language Mosaic: Building Communication Skills Through Multi-Modal Exploration"

- **Multi-Modal Activities:** Engage students in activities that utilize different communication modalities. Include activities like storytelling, role-playing, dialogues, and real-world simulations.
- **Language Partners:** Pair students with language partners (peers, volunteers, community members) for language exchange and practice.
- **Real-World Application:** Create opportunities for students to use their language skills in real-world contexts (field trips, community interactions, guest speaker presentations).
- **Cultural Context:** Incorporate cultural context into language learning to enhance understanding and appreciation of different communication styles.

Clear Objectives:

- To improve students' overall language proficiency in listening, speaking, reading, and writing.
- To enhance students' ability to communicate effectively in real-world situations.
- To foster cross-cultural understanding and appreciation through language learning.
- To develop students' confidence and fluency in using the new language.

GOOD PRACTICE 23

"Language Mosaic: Building Communication Skills Through Multi-Modal Exploration"

Implementation Instructions:

- **Step 1: Assessment:** Assess each student's language proficiency level and identify their individual needs and learning styles.
- **Step 2: Visual Aids:** Gather a variety of visual aids, such as pictures, diagrams, real objects, and gestures, to support language learning and make abstract concepts more concrete.
- **Step 3: Multi-Modal Activities:** Design and implement language-learning activities that incorporate different modalities (speaking, listening, reading, writing). Examples include:
 - Storytelling and retelling activities using visual aids.
 - Role-playing real-life scenarios (e.g., shopping, ordering food, asking for directions).
 - Dialogues and conversations with language partners.
 - Creating visual representations of vocabulary and grammar concepts.
- **Step 4: Language Partners:** Pair students with language partners who can provide support and practice opportunities. These partners can be peers, volunteers, or community members.
- **Step 5: Real-World Application:** Organize field trips, community interactions, or guest speaker presentations where students can use their language skills in authentic contexts.

GOOD PRACTICE 23

"Language Mosaic: Building Communication Skills Through Multi-Modal Exploration"

- Step 6: Cultural Context: Integrate cultural information and activities into language lessons to help students understand the cultural nuances of communication.

Benefits for teachers/students:

Teachers:

- Develop effective strategies for teaching language learners of diverse backgrounds and proficiency levels.
- Create a more inclusive and supportive learning environment for all students.
- Enhance their own communication skills and cultural awareness. Foster a school climate that values multilingualism and communication.

Students:

- Improve their language proficiency across different modalities (speaking, listening, reading, writing).
- Develop effective communication strategies for overcoming language barriers.
- Gain confidence in their ability to communicate in a new language.
- Build cross-cultural understanding and appreciation

GOOD PRACTICE 23

"Language Mosaic: Building Communication Skills Through Multi-Modal Exploration"

Main challenges:

Identifying individual needs:

Assess language proficiency levels and tailor instruction accordingly.

Addressing diverse learning styles:

Provide a variety of activities and resources to cater to different learning preferences.

Overcoming resource limitations:

Seek out partnerships with language support services and community organizations.

Key findings:

Research demonstrates that a multi-modal approach to language learning is highly effective for language learners of all ages and backgrounds.

By incorporating visual aids, real-world application, and cultural context, educators can create engaging and effective learning experiences that empower students to become confident and competent communicators.

Links to resources:

[ACTFL Language Connects](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 24

Language Journey

Key words: *Communication skills, vocabulary building, inclusivity*

Duration: 120 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Blank "language map" worksheets
- Writing materials (paper, pens)
- Whiteboard
- Scenario cards for role-playing
- Timer or stopwatch

Overview of the practice:

1. Explain the concept of the "language journey" as a metaphor for learning a new language and provide each participant with a blank "language map" worksheet. Such a worksheet consists of a simple grid, where students can write down new words and phrases they encounter or learn during the workshop.
2. Lead a vocabulary-building activity where students brainstorm and write down words related to common themes (e.g., family, food, school). Encourage students to share their words and create a collective list on a whiteboard.
3. Use the collected vocabulary to guide a storytelling activity where students write short narratives or dialogues incorporating the words they've brainstormed.
4. Based on the created stories, assign roles to students (e.g. by drawing prepared cards like "Scenario: Buying Groceries") and act out short scenarios related to everyday situations (e.g., shopping, asking for directions). Students use the language from their stories to communicate and problem-solve in the role-play scenarios.

GOOD PRACTICE 24

Language Journey

- 5. Based on the created stories, assign roles to students (e.g. by drawing prepared cards like “Scenario: Buying Groceries”) and act out short scenarios related to everyday situations (e.g., shopping, asking for directions). Students use the language from their stories to communicate and problem-solve in the role-play scenarios.
- 6. Students revisit their "language maps" and fill in new words they've learned during the workshop. Each student shares their language map with the group, highlighting key words and phrases they've added.

Benefits for teachers/students:

By structuring the workshop as a cohesive journey, students can see how each activity builds upon the previous one, leading to a holistic and immersive language learning experience. Students improve their language proficiency, enhance their communications skills and increase their confidence. Teachers can enhance their teaching skills, improve their connection with students and contribute to a more inclusive school culture where all students feel valued and respected.

Main challenges:

Students may face challenges related to limited proficiency in the target language, making it difficult to fully participate in workshop and express themselves effectively. In such a case help from the teacher would be necessary.

Catering to the diverse learning needs, backgrounds, and proficiency levels of students within a single workshop can be challenging, requiring teachers to adapt their instructional approaches and provide differentiated support.

GOOD PRACTICE 24

Language Journey

Key findings:

Students should demonstrate improvement in their language proficiency, increased vocabulary retention, and enhanced communication skills in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Students should feel more confident and comfortable using the target language in various contexts, including everyday conversations, school settings, and social interactions, leading to greater self-assurance and willingness to communicate. Another important finding are positive relationships with workshop facilitators, characterised by trust, respect, and support, leading to greater student engagement, motivation, and satisfaction with the workshop experience.



REFINC

IV ACADEMIC SUPPORT

**STRATEGIES TO ASSIST REFUGEE
STUDENTS IN CATCHING UP AND
EXCELLING ACADEMICALLY**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

GOOD PRACTICE 25

The Bell Foundation – EAL Strategies And Great Ideas

Key words: *EAL learners, collaboration, support, inclusion*

Duration: They can be used as soon as the pupil arrives and is willing to start their new school routine. The activities can be used with the whole group or just with the new pupils, depending on what they need.

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- There are not many needs regarding materials: each teacher should choose the suitable strategy and, if it is the case, create or look for already-made materials, such as flashcards, text templates, etc. The web provides us with some of them.
- Offering professional development workshops or training sessions for teachers on how to effectively use these strategies could ensure their successful implementation and maximize their impact.
- Bilingual dictionaries
- Audio-visual aids for language learning
- Pens, notebooks, and other standard classroom materials

Overview of the practice:

The resource gives us many “great ideas”:

- Barrier games: Barrier games are a specific form of an information gap activity.
- Bilingual dictionaries.
- Building vocabulary.
- Collaborative activities.
- DARTs: ‘DARTs’ stands for Directed Activities Related to Text.

GOOD PRACTICE 25

The Bell Foundation – EAL Strategies And Great Ideas

- Dictogloss: Dictogloss is a type of supported dictation.
- Drama and role play.
- Early literacy word work.
- Enhancing classroom talk.
- Flashcards.
- Focusing on grammar patterns.
- From talk to writing: 'Talk to writing' occurs when a teacher plans scaffolded activities that allow learners to orally rehearse explicit vocabulary, sentence, and language structures that they require in order to write.
- Graphic organisers.
- Information gap activities.
- Jigsaw activities.
- Language drills.
- Modelling: Modelling is providing learners with a written or oral model of the language that the teacher would like the learner to produce.
- Questioning strategies: Questioning strategies involve the ability to ask the right questions at the right time; it is a powerful tool to guide learning, stretch pupils' thinking, check for understanding and build confidence in pupils.
- Reading for meaning.
- Scaffolding: Scaffolding means providing temporary support for an inexperienced learner in order to help them to complete a task or acquire a skill, and then gradually withdrawing that support.
- Speaking and writing frames.
- Substitution tables: a teacher provides a table giving model sentences with a range of choices for learners to select from, using a set pattern.

GOOD PRACTICE 25

The Bell Foundation – EAL Strategies And Great Ideas

- Translanguaging: term used to describe practices that allow and encourage EAL learners to use their full linguistic repertoire in order to empower them and help them to realise their full potential.
- Using ICT.
- Visuals.

Practical implementation:

This practice is designed to address language barriers that refugee students face in school environments. It involves interactive workshops that encourage active participation from students, utilizing both their native languages and the language of the host country.

- **Introduction to Language Resources (5 minutes):** Introduce students to what will be done in this workshop.
- **Basic Language Skills Activity (40 minutes):** Engage students in basic language exercises that cover essential vocabulary and phrases. Use visual aids and interactive games to facilitate learning.
- **Communication Role-play (30 minutes):** Conduct role-play scenarios where students practice common communicative situations they might encounter in school, encouraging them to apply new vocabulary and phrases.

GOOD PRACTICE 25

The Bell Foundation – EAL Strategies And Great Ideas

Scenario 1: Asking for Help

Student A: "Excuse me, can you help me understand this math problem?"

Student B: "Sure, let me take a look. Which part are you having trouble with?"

Scenario 2: Introducing Themselves

Student A: "Hi, I'm new here. My name is Ahmed."

Student B: "Nice to meet you, Ahmed. I'm Maria. Where are you from?"

Scenario 3: Ordering Food

Student A: "I'd like a sandwich and a bottle of water, please."

Student B: "Sure, would you like any toppings on your sandwich?"

Scenario 4: Seeking Information

Student A: "Excuse me, do you know where the library is?"

Student B: "Yes, it's on the second floor. I can show you if you'd like."

Scenario 5: Resolving a Conflict

Student A: "You took my pencil without asking!"

Student B: "I'm sorry, I didn't realize it was yours. Here you go."

GOOD PRACTICE 25

The Bell Foundation – EAL Strategies And Great Ideas

- Group Discussion and Feedback (30 minutes): Allow students to share their experiences with language barriers and discuss strategies that can help overcome these challenges. Provide feedback on their participation and language use during the role-play.

Benefits for teachers/students:

This wide range of strategies can be used for lots of purposes and seem helpful for the children's adaptation to language and school routine.

Teachers gain insights into the specific language needs of refugee students, while students improve their language skills, enhancing their ability to communicate effectively in the school environment.

Main challenges:

The main challenge teachers may find is to implement these strategies with the pupils who need it (in this case, the refugees) while the rest of the pupils are doing different things. These tips are useful but might take time (preparing and putting them in practice).

Apart from that, as the strategies are in English, the teachers wanting to teach another language will have to translate some of the resources and adapt them to their mother tongue.

Ensuring engagement from students with varying language proficiency levels.

Measuring progress and providing individualized feedback.

GOOD PRACTICE 25

The Bell Foundation – EAL Strategies And Great Ideas

Key findings:

The strategies and “great ideas”, effective language and communication practices will help our refugee students improving their academic performance, social integration, language skills, and overall well-being in the school environment, as they will start being an “ordinary” pupil and getting in touch with the new language and system.

Links to resources:

- [EAL Strategies and Great Ideas - The Bell Foundation](#)
- [Language equality in the digital age](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 26

Where do I come from and where am I now?

Key words: *Inclusion, reflection, empathy*

Duration: 50 to 60 minutes (duration varies according to the size of the group and the amount of information shared)

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- World map and map of the country you are in,
- pins,
- thick thread,
- colored papers,
- markers/pens

Overview of the practice:

Group members are asked to write down all continents in capital letters, one A4 sheet per continent, and to try to place the papers with the continents' names on the floor in order according to their position on the world map.

Home country

Each participant is asked to stand on top of the continent from which they come. Participants take turns to name their home country and possibly the city/town/village they used to live in. They also state what they think is wonderful about their home country and/or city/town/village.

At this point, the facilitator shows the world map. Participants locate their own continents and countries and see which other countries are located on the same continent.

GOOD PRACTICE 26

Where do I come from and where am I now?

Own journey

Each group member takes pins and thread and recreates their own migratory route on the world map to the country they are in and to the city/town/village in which they are currently residing. Participants may point several venues/stops through which their route has run.

Besides being able to share some information about their personal story, participants will reflect on the different journeys. At the end of the exercise, the facilitator is encouraged to start a discussion about what the different participants felt during their journeys and what they liked/disliked about some of the stages of the journey. If the context allows, the facilitators might also ask whether someone wants to share some difficulties they have faced during the journey and/or about some pleasant things they discovered.

For teachers and educators here are [general guidelines how to improve cultural sensitivity and foster inclusion](#).

Benefits for teachers/students:

Teachers:

- Better understanding about their students feelings and thoughts, to strengthen their bond and possible root of ones conflict situation.

Students:

- Opening themselves, not needed to feel vulnerable, peer experience sharing and understanding, inclusive environment

GOOD PRACTICE 26

Where do I come from and where am I now?

Main challenges:

Main challenges would be the proper preparation of the students and make sure:

- If they are comfortable in sharing
- Cultural restrictions
- Not to invade their beliefs
- Language barriers

Key findings:

This activity can be a real bias breaker, as it will in the end remove misconceptions of refuge or local students. It serves as an opener for communication as when others see the journeys and experiences felt by others, they can better understand them how they feel and with what they have to cope with.

Links to resources:

[Activities and ideas](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 27

Teacher Training: Mentoring and Reference Models to Support the Integration of Migrant and Refugee Students (1st edition)

Key words: *Mentoring; teacher training; teacher support*

Duration: 25h Training Course for Teachers, divided into online and offline sessions

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

Throughout the training, videos, documentation, links and bibliography will be made available to enable trainees to deepen their knowledge of the topics.

Overview of the practice:

The aim of this course is to train teachers to develop effective strategies for welcoming and integrating migrant students, by presenting methodological proposals, based initially on deconstructing myths, prejudices and stereotypes (conscious or unconscious), with the aim of overcoming existing barriers and limitations and promoting a true culture of diversity in the classroom, thus contributing to the success of the integration process.

The course is also aimed at disseminating new pedagogical approaches to learning methodologies for curricular content.

This training course aims to:

- Increase teachers' knowledge, skills and abilities to ensure that children's access (and right to access) to quality education is respected, protected and fulfilled;

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Teacher Training: Mentoring and Reference Models to Support the Integration of Migrant and Refugee Students (1st edition)

- To deconstruct myths, prejudices and stereotypes among participating teachers regarding the reception of students of different nationalities in the educational context;
- Train teachers to develop strategies for integrating migrant pupils into educational contexts, by involving the pupils themselves in mentoring and as role models in the process of integrating new migrant and refugee pupils;
- To provide participants with a set of tools and strategies for guiding and counselling their students in a supportive environment in the classroom.

The Training course is organized into 8 Modules:

- Presentation (2 synchronous hours)
- Module I. Self-diagnosis: Myths, stereotypes and prejudices (3 asynchronous hours)
- Module II. Integration of migrant/refugee pupils in schools (3 asynchronous hours)
- Module III. Teachers' contribution to reducing the impact of negative experiences of refugee/migrant pupils (3 asynchronous hours)
- Module IV. Strategies for integrating migrant/refugee students into the classroom (3 asynchronous hours)
- Module V. Mentoring: Concepts and Fundamentals (2 synchronous hours)

GOOD PRACTICE 27

Teacher Training: Mentoring and Reference Models to Support the Integration of Migrant and Refugee Students (1st edition)

- Module VI. What makes a good mentor? (2 synchronous hours)
- Module VII. Implementing Mentoring programmes in schools (2 synchronous hours)
- Module VIII. Complementary activities to support the integration of refugee/migrant children (2 synchronous hours)
- Presentation of suggested activities for implementation in the classroom
- Evaluation (2 synchronous hours + 1 asynchronous hour)
- Presentation and discussion of the scope of the methodologies applied in a school context.
- Critical reflection.

Benefits for teachers/students:

For Teachers:

- Enrichment of knowledge and pedagogical skills focused on diversity and inclusion.
- Training to deconstruct myths, prejudices and stereotypes, promoting a more conscious and sensitive approach to welcoming migrant/refugee students..

GOOD PRACTICE 27

Teacher Training: Mentoring and Reference Models to Support the Integration of Migrant and Refugee Students (1st edition)

- Acquisition of practical tools and strategies for mentoring, facilitating the integration and educational success of migrant/refugee students.
- Development of skills in communication, empathy and conflict resolution, essential in accompanying and supporting students

For Students:

- A more welcoming and inclusive school environment, respecting diversity and promoting equal opportunities.
- A greater sense of belonging and acceptance by recognising and valuing their cultures and experiences.
- Support through mentoring programmes, which facilitate integration, learning and emotional well-being.
- Promotion of positive role models among the students themselves, encouraging mutual support and mutual help.

Main challenges:

- **Resistance to Change:** There may be resistance on the part of teachers or the school community to adapt to new teaching methodologies and approaches that promote diversity and inclusion.
- **Limited Resources:** A lack of material, financial and human resources can hinder the effective implementation of proposed strategies, including mentoring programmes.

GOOD PRACTICE 27

Teacher Training: Mentoring and Reference Models to Support the Integration of Migrant and Refugee Students (1st edition)

- **Diversity of Needs:** The heterogeneity of migrant/refugee students, including linguistic and cultural differences and traumatic experiences, poses a significant challenge for teachers in personalising support.
- **Teacher Training and Support:** The need for ongoing training and support for teachers to deal with complex issues of trauma, cultural diversity and integration.

Key findings :

The training represents a fundamental initiative to respond to the challenges of growing cultural diversity in Portuguese schools, promoting the integration of migrant and refugee students in an effective and respectful manner. It emphasises the importance of deconstructing prejudices and fostering a culture of diversity, not only for the well-being and success of migrant/refugee students, but also to enrich the educational experience of the entire school community.

It also concludes that mentoring programmes and teacher training in intercultural competences are essential for building inclusive school environments, promoting a more cohesive and welcoming society.

Links to resources:

[Mentoria e Modelos de Referência no Apoio à Integração de Alunos Migrantes e Refugiados \(1.ª edição\)](#) (Portuguese language)



REFINC

V COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

**ENCOURAGING THE LOCAL COMMUNITY
AND FAMILIES' INVOLVEMENT IN THE
INTEGRATION PROCESS**



**Co-funded by
the European Union**

GOOD PRACTICE 28

Engaging Communities and Refugee Students

Key words:

Cultural Routes, Community Engagement, Refugee Integration

Duration: 90 minutes workshop session

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Projector for presentations on Cultural Routes
- Notebooks and pens for participants
- Computer and internet access for digital resources

Overview of the practice:

- Introduction and Brainstorming (20 minutes):

Start by briefly introducing the importance of community involvement in supporting refugee students' integration. Encourage participants to share their thoughts and experiences related to community engagement. Facilitate a brainstorming session where participants suggest ideas for engaging the local community and families.

- Small Group Discussions (30 minutes):

1. Dividing Participants into Groups (5 minutes):

Begin by dividing the participants into small groups, ideally consisting of 3-5 individuals per group. You can use various methods for grouping, such as numbering off, assigning colored stickers, or simply allowing participants to self-select into groups.

GOOD PRACTICE 28

Engaging Communities and Refugee Students

2. Assigning Specific Aspects of Community Engagement (5 minutes):
Once the groups are formed, provide each group with a specific aspect of community engagement to focus on. For example:

3. Guiding Questions for Discussion (20 minutes):
For each aspect of community engagement, provide guiding questions to prompt discussion and idea generation within the groups. Here are some examples:

Parent Outreach:

- How can we effectively communicate with parents to involve them in school activities and support their engagement in their children's education?
- What barriers might parents face in participating in school events, and how can we overcome these barriers?
- What strategies can we implement to build trust and collaboration between parents, teachers, and school staff?

Collaboration with Local Businesses:

- How can we identify local businesses willing to partner with our school to support refugee students' integration?
- What types of resources or support can local businesses provide to enhance educational opportunities for refugee students?
- How can we ensure that collaborations with local businesses are mutually beneficial and aligned with the needs of both parties?

GOOD PRACTICE 28

Engaging Communities and Refugee Students

Involvement of Community Organizations:

- What community organizations exist in our local area, and how can we leverage their resources and expertise to support refugee students?
- What specific roles can community organizations play in addressing the unique needs and challenges faced by refugee students and their families?
- How can we establish effective partnerships with community organizations to facilitate ongoing support and engagement in the integration process?

- **Sharing and Feedback (30 minutes):**

After the allotted discussion time, reconvene the full group and invite representatives from each group to share the key findings and ideas generated during their discussions. Encourage presenters to provide brief summaries and highlight any innovative or promising approaches identified by their group.

- **Conclusion and Next Steps (10 minutes):**

Summarize the key insights and action points identified during the workshop. Reinforce the importance of community engagement in fostering the integration and well-being of refugee students, and express appreciation for participants' contributions and commitment to this important work.

GOOD PRACTICE 28

Engaging Communities and Refugee Students

Benefits for teachers/students:

Provides an innovative approach to integrating refugee students through cultural engagement, fostering mutual understanding and social cohesion in school communities.

Main challenges:

Balancing educational objectives with engagement activities, ensuring meaningful participation from all students, and adapting cultural heritage education to diverse student backgrounds.

Key findings :

Incorporating cultural heritage and community engagement into refugee student integration can enhance empathy, cultural understanding, and social cohesion in school environments.

Links to resources:

[Social participation and social cohesion in the EU-macro regions](#)

GOOD PRACTICE 29

"Welcome Circles: Building Bridges Through Shared Experiences"

Key words:

Integration, cultural exchange, volunteerism, family engagement

Duration: Ongoing with regular events and activities scheduled throughout the year.

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Identify community spaces for events (parks, community centers, libraries).
- Recruit volunteers from the local community (language partners, cultural ambassadors, mentors).
- Organize welcoming events (potlucks, cultural fairs, sports activities, language exchanges).
- Develop communication channels (newsletters, social media, parent-teacher meetings).

Overview of the practice:

Welcome Circles aims to foster meaningful connections between refugee families, local community members, and school staff.

The practice involves:

- **Welcoming Events:** Organize events that celebrate cultural diversity and provide opportunities for interaction and shared experiences.
- **Volunteer Opportunities:** Engage community members as volunteers to support refugee families in various ways (language tutoring, cultural orientation, social activities).
- **Family Engagement:** Encourage refugee families to participate in school activities and events, fostering a sense of belonging and connection.

GOOD PRACTICE 29

"Welcome Circles: Building Bridges Through Shared Experiences"

- Open Communication: Create platforms for open dialogue and exchange between refugee families, school staff, and community members.

Action steps: Addition to practice " Welcoming circles"

Benefits for teachers/students:

Teachers gain cultural insights and community support, build relationships with families, and create an inclusive environment.

Students develop belonging, learn from diverse perspectives, improve language skills, and access a wider support network.

Main challenges:

Overcoming language barriers:

Provide interpreters or translation services as needed.

Building trust:

Create safe spaces for open dialogue and cultural exchange.

Addressing cultural misunderstandings:

Offer cultural sensitivity training for volunteers and school staff.

Key findings:

Research indicates that strong community engagement is crucial for successful refugee integration. When schools, families, and communities work together, refugee students experience smoother transitions, improved academic outcomes, and greater overall well-being.

Links to resources:

Community Based Protection

GOOD PRACTICE 30

In their sneakers

Key words: *Refugee inclusion, awareness, support, secondary students*

Duration: The initiative could be effectively conducted over a period of one academic year. This timeframe allows for the gradual introduction of activities, giving students ample time to engage, reflect, and develop projects related to refugee inclusion and integration. Workshops and activities could be interspersed throughout the year to align with school terms and holidays, ensuring a sustained and impactful learning experience.

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- Interactive workshop materials
- Refugee speakers or facilitators
- Multimedia resources for awareness
- Translation services
- Project development tools

Overview of the practice:

This initiative aims to raise awareness among high school students and teachers about the needs and potentials of refugees. It involves interactive workshops and activities that foster understanding and empathy towards the refugee experience.

Objectives:

- To cultivate intercultural understanding and empathy among students and teachers.
- To highlight the talents, skills, and knowledge that refugees bring to their host communities.
- To encourage the development of inclusive school projects that support refugee integration.

GOOD PRACTICE 30

In their sneakers

Implementation:

1. **Workshop Initiation:** A day-long workshop in Belgrade marks the start, with representatives from various schools participating in activities that include direct interaction with young refugees. This encounter is designed to dismantle preconceptions and foster direct understanding of the refugee experience.
2. **Awareness and Education:** Through presentations and discussions, participants are introduced to the challenges faced by refugees.
3. **Project Development:** Students are tasked with creating small projects throughout the academic year that focus on the inclusion and integration of refugees into local communities.
4. **Ongoing Support and Evaluation:** UNHCR provides continuous support and resources for the development of these projects. At the end of the year, the most creative and impactful projects are recognized and awarded.

Results: The initiative leads to greater awareness and understanding of refugee issues among students and teachers. It also results in tangible projects that contribute to the inclusion and integration of refugees in local communities.

How to Implement:

- Coordinate with UNHCR and local education authorities to organize the initial workshop.
- Engage with refugee communities to participate in the program.
- Provide resources and training for students and teachers to develop and implement their projects.
- Monitor and evaluate the projects, offering support as needed.

The practice educates and empowers students to take meaningful action towards creating inclusive environments for refugees, thereby enhancing the educational experience for all participants.

GOOD PRACTICE 30

In their sneakers

Benefits for teachers/students:

By participating in this initiative, students develop critical thinking, empathy, and project management skills. Refugees benefit from increased acceptance and support within their new communities, enhancing their integration process and overall well-being.

Main challenges:

Obstacles include language barriers, cultural misunderstandings, and limited engagement. Overcoming these requires offering language support, cultural competency training, and actively involving refugees in planning and executing activities. Ensuring continuous dialogue and feedback among students, teachers, and refugees can foster a more inclusive and understanding school environment, aiding successful integration.

Key findings :

The practice aids refugee students by enhancing language acquisition and academic performance through tailored educational support. Social integration is fostered by creating empathy and connections with peers, improving psychological well-being. The inclusive environment boosts confidence, facilitating a smoother adaptation to the new school setting and promoting overall success in their educational journey.

Links to resources:

[Project “In their Sneakers”](#) in Serbian language

GOOD PRACTICE 31

Storytellers' Circle: Cultural Exchange Through Stories

Key words:

Cultural stories, class activity, refugee awareness, empathy building

Duration: 120 minutes

Preliminary preparation and needed materials:

- A comfortable seating arrangement for a circle.
- Guidelines for respectful listening and sharing.
- Materials for students to create a simple cultural artifact or drawing related to the stories (paper, coloring materials, etc.).

Overview of the practice:

The "Cultural Story Circle" is a simple, engaging activity that a single teacher can implement in a classroom setting. It aims to foster empathy, cultural awareness, and inclusivity by sharing and discussing cultural stories, particularly those highlighting refugee experiences.

Step-by-Step Instructions for Teachers:

Step 1: Introduction (5 minutes)

Introduce the concept of the Cultural Story Circle, emphasizing respect, active listening, and open-mindedness.

Explain the importance of sharing and understanding diverse cultural backgrounds, especially those of refugees.

GOOD PRACTICE 31

Storytellers' Circle: Cultural Exchange Through Stories

Step 2: Story Sharing (1 hour)

Begin the circle with a teacher or student sharing a brief cultural story or experience, preferably related to a refugee's perspective.

Pass the opportunity to share to the students, encouraging them to tell a story from their own culture or a story they've heard. If students are hesitant, have a few backup stories ready.

Facilitate a short discussion after each story, focusing on feelings, insights, and cultural values.

Step 3: Reflective Activity (30 minutes)

After the stories are shared, provide materials for students to create a simple artifact or drawing that represents something they learned or felt during the story circle.

Encourage creativity and personal expression, allowing students to depict cultural symbols, emotions, or key story elements.

Step 4: Sharing and Wrap-Up (15 minutes)

Invite students to share their creations or reflections with the class, explaining the significance of their work.

Conclude the activity with a discussion on the value of empathy and cultural understanding, reinforcing the importance of inclusivity and respect for diverse backgrounds.

GOOD PRACTICE 31

Storytellers' Circle: Cultural Exchange Through Stories

Benefits for teachers/students:

- Enhances students' listening and empathy skills.
- Promotes cultural awareness and appreciation within the classroom.
- Encourages students to express their thoughts and feelings creatively.

Main challenges:

- Ensuring all students feel comfortable and respected during sharing.
- Managing time effectively to allow for sharing and discussion.

Key findings:

- Participating in a story circle can significantly increase students' understanding and empathy for different cultures, including those of refugee peers.
- The activity encourages students to reflect on their own cultural identities and appreciate the diversity of their classmates.

Links to resources:

- [Working together to bring the EU closer to its citizens](#)
- [Social participation and social cohesion in the EU macro-regions](#)
- [Action plan on integration and inclusion 2021 - 2027](#)



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FINAL WORDS

As educators, we hold the responsibility and privilege of shaping inclusive, nurturing environments where every student feels valued, respected, and supported. The practices outlined in this booklet are designed to guide you in fostering such environments for refugee students, helping them not only integrate but also thrive in the classroom. By applying these approaches, you contribute to creating a brighter future where diversity is celebrated, and every child is empowered to reach their potential.

This booklet, developed by the consortium of the Erasmus+ project "Increasing Participation of Refugees in European Schools - REFINC," 2023-1-ES01-KA220-SCH-000166694, represents just the beginning of an ongoing commitment to enhancing educational support for refugee children. We hope these 30 good practices provide you with valuable insights and effective tools to address the unique challenges and opportunities of inclusive education. Together, through continuous learning, empathy, and dedication, we can make a lasting impact in the lives of our students and build more cohesive and compassionate communities across Europe.

Thank you for your commitment to making a difference!



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