



STRENGTHENING REFUGEE AND MIGRANT CHILDREN'S HEALTH STATUS

IN SOUTHERN AND SOUTH-EASTERN EUROPE

Refugee and migrant children and their families often have more health-related risks and face a number of barriers accessing quality health care. Many children and families also live with severe emotional distress due to the trauma of fleeing home, undertaking dangerous journeys and experiencing abuse and exploitation, including sexual and gender-based violence. The global COVID-19 pandemic has further exacerbated these health challenges.

UNICEF, co-funded by the Health Programme of the European Union, is working to ensure that refugee and migrant children and their families have access to quality health care and accurate health information in Bulgaria, Greece, Italy, Spain, Bosnia Herzegovina and Serbia.

The project will help improve the health of refugee and migrant children by improving their access to life-saving immunization, mental health and psychosocial support, gender-based violence prevention and response activities as well as maternal and newborn health care and nutrition support.

In Serbia, UNICEF, in partnership with the Ministries of Health and Labour, Employment, Veteran and Social Affairs, the Commissariat for Refugees and Migration of the Republic of Serbia, the Institute of Public Health of Serbia Dr Milan Jovanovic Batut, the Institute for Mental Health, the World Health Organization, and civil sector partners will work to contribute to:

- **Strengthening national authorities' capacity to provide healthcare to refugee and migrant children by**
 - Supporting immunization of refugee and migrant children
 - Ensuring access to community based psychosocial activities, skill-building programmes, protection activities for children, and referral to specialized mental health services
 - Supporting GBV prevention and response services
 - Capacity building in the areas of breastfeeding and nutrition of children

- **Increasing health literacy among refugee and migrant children and their parents by**

- Developing and disseminating information materials on health-related risks and services available for refugee and migrant populations, including related to GBV, substance abuse, breastfeeding and nutrition
- Supporting development of the regional guidance on working with boys survivors of sexual violence
- Improving access to information and informing skill-building programmes by voices and needs of youth

- **Strengthening implementation of national health policies by**

- Delivering and supporting training programmes for frontline health care and protection workers working in asylum and reception centres on issues of substance abuse, GBV, etc.
- Supporting a comprehensive assessment on substance abuse and risky behaviours in refugee/migrant children and youth
- Developing guidance on prevention and response in cases of substance abuse in refugee/migrant population
- Supporting coordination and work of Child Protection Working Group and Mental Health Working Group

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