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BLUE DOTS

Children and Family Support Hubs

Ukraine Emergency in Neighboring countries

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Children and
Family Protection
Support Hub

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BACKGROUND

Due to the conflict in Ukraine, large-scale refugee movements of more than 2 million persons have taken place into neighbouring countries, including the Czech Republic, Hungary, the Republic of Moldova, Poland, Romania and Slovakia.

Most of them are children. The intensification of the armed conflict is posing severe distress for children, interrupting their livelihoods and damaging critical civilian infrastructure, including hundreds of homes, water and sanitation infrastructure, schools and health facilities.

Children are in shock, and desperate for safety. Hundreds of thousands are on the move, the majority of whom are women and children.

Displacement places women and children at increased risk of gender based violence, abuse, psychological trauma, and family separation.

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WHAT ARE THE BLUE DOTS HUBS?

The Children and Family Protection Support Hubs (Blue Dots) provide a minimum set of key child protection and social service delivery and referrals for children and families. Blue Dot Hubs will be implemented in cooperation with UNHCR and other relevant partners.

The Blue Dots also serve the critical function of sharing reliable, updated and accurate information with new arrivals, including on services, documentation and family reunification. The information is provided through multiple channels, in accessible and child-friendly formats, different languages, and in online/digital form. The Blue Dots are locations where professional, trained social workers, psychologists, counsellors, and legal aid providers are available to support identification of urgent social service and protection needs and ensure that those needs are addressed. Such services can also provide support to others with specific needs, such as victims of gender-based violence and persons with disabilities.

The Blue Dots builds on the government's national protection system and are linked to the national and local referral pathways and services.

WHERE WILL THE BLUE DOTS SET UP?

Blue Dots are mainly established along anticipated routes of major refugee flows and may include locations such as border crossing points, transport hubs, or strategic urban locations. They can also be embedded into refugee registration sites, in reception facilities or at cash distribution points. In liaison with national governments, UNICEF and UNHCR will assess the most suitable locations for Blue Dots in each specific context, taking into consideration the movement and needs of the refugee population.

MINIMUM SERVICES TO BE OFFERED AT BLUE DOTS

IDENTIFICATION AND REFERRAL OF CHILDREN AT RISK

Provide in-depth child protection assessment to identify needs for a) immediate referral to statutory child protection structures/services (children at risk of separation, UASC) or b) on-site support/ assistance to those in need. Family reunification and ensuring children restore links with their family members will also be part of the support provided to unaccompanied and separated children.

PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT

Ensure individuals, families or groups with mental health conditions or in distress have access to psychological first aid and focused support through trained mental health psychologists; families and communities/groups can have access to inclusive activities that support recovery, resilience and psychological well-being of children, families and communities.

LEGAL AID AND COUNSELLING

Provided to children and families, as well as others with specific needs, on registration, documentation, birth registration, family reunification and other issues.

INFORMATION AND ADVICE DESKS

Information on available services, asylum and family reunification procedures. When specific vulnerabilities or risks/concerns are detected, children and families are referred to the social worker of the Blue Dot for further assessment; to be complemented by 'digital blue dots' in online form to support information for persons on the move; Provision of Wi-Fi connectivity and charging stations, where possible. Information boards, screens for video screening, or even tablets.

CHILD- AND FAMILY-FRIENDLY SPACES

Ensure children of all ages can have access to child-friendly spaces, allowing rest and play, separate spaces and specific interventions for adolescent girls and boys, as per respective IASC Guidelines and standards. Access to group activities for child well-being.

Provide mothers with access to dedicated mother and baby/toddler spaces, for breastfeeding, baby care and hygiene, access to safe drinking water for formula and ORS, etc.

Additional components that may be needed (based on availability of space, needs and partner interest):

MEDICAL FIRST AID

Government and non-government partners

SAFE AREAS TO SLEEP

Safe area where persons with specific needs can rest for a short time or will be referred to longer-term emergency accommodation (local authorities)

SPECIFIC NFIS

Depending on the needs of childrenand women, including children with disabilities (government and local authorities, UNHCR, UNICEF and other partners)

INFORMATION AND ADVICE DESK

Provision of general information including of location and available services in general with location. This might include information desks, simple Information boards, screens for video screening or even tablets (UNHCR).

All Blue Dots should have the capacity to be mobile. Current Blue Dot minimum capacity includes social workers, child psychologists, legal aid providers and interpreters, plus a mobile team as needed that can deploy from the Blue Dot location to other locations which register new/high influx of refugees or linking to statutory structures and services to ensure that children referred to statutory services access and receive these services, as well as to trace and provide monitoring to the high need cases.

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GOVERNANCE & COORDINATION OF BLUE DOTS

Blue Dot services will be fully coordinated with all relevant partners. Child Protection Sub-Working Groups and other coordination structures will enable the identification of other partners who are providing similar interventions, and ensure that linkages are made with the Blue Dots.

Blue Dot roll-out and work in these spaces will be consistently aligned with the national and local protection system – which means all the planning and execution is done with government approval and buy-in, and that clear linkages are established with nationally and locally provided service architecture.