MHPSS TWG - Bulgaria

Meeting Minutes

19/12/23

Members

WHO, IOM, UNICEF, Foundation Ukraine Support and Renovation, For Our Children Foundation, Energy, NCPHA, Dokovi Foundation, Ukrainian Hive, BASW

Updates & Achievements

1. Up-dates from members and introduction of new members

- We had one new member - Dokovi for Future Foundation is located in Varna and is running the first children center for Ukrainian refugees in Varna. They are one of the founders of Energy Foundation. Their main activities are centered around enrollment of Ukrainian children in Bulgarian schools as they see this as very beneficial for the children.

2. Burnout prevention for staff and frontline workers

- Ass. Prof. Zarkov from the National Center for Public Health and Analysis and his team presented the Detection and Prevention of Burnout Guidebook, created under a WHO supported project. A link will be sent with the minutes. It was noted that the guidebook should be used by managers for identification and prevention but is not a tool for treatment of burnout for which a specialized therapist should be engaged. Part of the original project was a training for Red Cross staff and the NCPHA are open to deliver together with WHO more trainings in 2024 if the TWG members have interest.
- UNICEF also provided a tool – self-assessment for teachers for burnout that could be used by other professionals as well. The link will also be attached to the minutes. It is an interactive tool, very practical with links to other resources in it. It was created under their project for prevention of bullying in schools.
- Angela Andonova volunteered to feedback the results from the Green line project and the analysis she was able to make on the basis if the calls the line received on the burnout of frontline workers.
- Energy and Dokovi Foundation shared their experience with burnout from the work in Varna and how difficult it was to find time and resources to support the team and volunteers.

2. Presentation of UNICEF's assessment of children and young people's needs and interests

- The UNICEF team presented an assessment of 300 Ukrainian and 300 non-Ukrainian refugees aged 10-25. The presentation will be attached to the minutes as well. Divided in 3 groups – 10-14; 15-19, 20-24 the participants showed the highest level of psychological discomfort to be in the age 15-19 with around 30% of children being afraid that someone might hurt them in Bulgaria or bully them. Self-reported 42% need professional psychological support. One of the conclusions is that they prefer to stay closed in Ukrainian communities and rarely make friends with Bulgarian children. The comparison with non-Ukrainian refugees is also very telling – only 4%of non-Ukrainians go to school with 45% of Ukrainians but they feel safer in Bulgaria then Ukrainians.

3. MHPSS TWG in 2024?

-The chair suggested that the first meeting of 2024 should include a discussion about the TWG itself and if we would like to change or add anything to the organization of the meetings.

Action Points

- Chair to circulate the minutes and the attached documents.