

Kraków and UNICEF together support the youngest refugees

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Kraków will receive nearly 80 million PLN to help the youngest refugees. This support is possible thanks to the city's cooperation with UNICEF. Today, Mayor of Kraków Jacek Majchrowski and UNICEF Deputy Regional Director for Central Europe and Asia Philippe Cori signed an agreement which provides for joint action on behalf of refugees until the end of 2022.

Over the past few weeks, meetings were held between UNICEF representatives and the Department of Education, the Department of Social Policy and Health and the Municipal Social Welfare Centre, during which specific plans for assistance to this group of refugees were discussed.

The meetings identified areas for support, which are primarily activities in the field of education, projects related to improving the health and psycho-social development of children and young people from Ukraine, and services related to comprehensive assistance for families.

- Today our earlier talks with UNICEF representatives have been finalised. Above all, I would like to thank UNICEF for reacting so quickly and offering specific help immediately, - said Mayor Jacek Majchrowski during the briefing.

- We must support children because they are the hope for the future, especially if we want to avoid losing a generation. We are doing everything to make them smile, because if they are happy, we will also see a smile on the faces of their parents - said Director Philippe Cori in a moving speech during a briefing after the signing of the memorandum.

- The first tranche of aid in the amount of PLN 50 million will be transferred to us in the coming days - added Deputy Mayor Andrzej Kulig.

Education

The Department of Education of the City of Kraków has proposed projects which aim to provide children and young people with additional psychological and pedagogical support in eight local government counselling centres, to organise training for teachers and multicultural assistants which includes Polish language courses, to extend the cultural and leisure offer directed at children and young people, or a programme of additional classes for pupils on Polish and Ukrainian history, culture and geography. The aid will also include subsidising meals and equipping schools with, among other things, laptops and other necessary teaching materials, as well as creating open air recreation areas in Kraków schools, which will be places for Polish and Ukrainian students to spend time and relax. These tasks have been estimated at PLN 40 million.

Social policy and health

The Department of Social Policy and Health predicts tasks that will concern in particular such areas as: disability, youth, care for children under 3, health and family. The cost of these activities has been estimated at over PLN 23.5 million for: creation of an educational and



rehabilitation centre for children with disabilities, organisation of integration and sports activities, educational integration walks around Kraków, creation of an integration public nursery, popularisation and implementation of preventive vaccinations among Ukrainian families and provision of psychological, psychotherapeutic and psychiatric support for Ukrainian families, as well as creation of the Family Initiatives Centre, which will be a friendly space for families with children of different ages.

Social assistance

The Municipal Social Welfare Centre in Kraków will allocate around PLN 15.5 million to run 29 day care centres for children and young people, with recreation, therapeutic activities and training for staff. In addition, these funds will provide a hot meal for children in nurseries, kindergartens and schools, support for temporary carers, adaptation and cultural activities for children and educational workshops. This money will help set up a new unit to provide community-based, mobile support in the form of family assistants.

There are currently around 6550 children from Ukraine who arrived in Kraków after 24 February and who attend Kraków nurseries, pre-schools and schools. This figure does not include children who are in the sole care of their families and guardians.

UNICEF is the United Nations Children's Fund established by the United Nations General Assembly in 1946 to provide food and health care for children and mothers in countries devastated by World War II. The founder of UNICEF is widely recognised as the Polish physician Ludwik Rajchman, who was the first president of UNICEF between 1946 and 1950. In 1953 UNICEF became part of the United Nations System. UNICEF's activities are funded entirely by voluntary contributions from UN member states, legal entities and individuals.

UNICEF, in cooperation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and other partners, provides assistance with key child protection, welfare and social services. In times of humanitarian crisis, UNICEF works to protect children on the move, reunite children separated from their families, prevent and counter violence and protect children from sexual exploitation and violence.

In view of the hostilities in Ukraine, the Government signed an agreement with UNICEF on 17 March 2022, which guarantees assistance in various activities, including opening assistance centres, providing financial support to Polish national and local authorities to ensure sufficient numbers of social workers and other child protection workers; creating child-friendly spaces where children will have access to educational activities, mental health care or psychosocial support.