

## Brief findings of UNICEF Lithuania CFCI specialists study visit to UNICEF Iceland

2022.09.15-17

Municipality of Hafnarfjordur

Initiative “BRIDGE”

- Collaboration model between different systems within the municipality
- Building bridge between the school service, the social service, preschools and the compulsory schools, and health care clinics.
- The service is provided within the municipality but in different parties and in different government levels.
- **The reason for the BRIDGE:** difficult to see how it can be mixed together, difficult for children and families to find out who is doing what, where a needed service for the child could be found. System is too complicated with too many service providers, it is hard for parents to understand the system.
- Had been started before joining CFCI and went separately from the CFCI action plan, but are related in goals.
- The aim is to improve the quality of children’s life and to increase collaboration.
- Firstly, resources are put to work at schools – the school starts to work with a child to see how they can support the child (educational support, behavioral support, psychological support). If the child has difficulties within the school (subjects etc.) they try to offer smaller groups to work in, offer extra help, if the subject is too difficult it can be removed, talk with a child and see how the school can help them.
- If the school sees that a child needs more support than school can provide, the case is handed over to the next level – the BRIDGE team (it consists of different kind of specialists and professionals). All is done with parents’ approval.
- The BRIDGE team – people from school (school administration), social services. They try to find a solution how to help the child with little more resources.
- The family gets a case manager that helps with more resources, whether the parents need help at home with the parenting methods or the child needs emotional support.
- The key thing is that parents and child approves of this method, this way the support group, the school is aware of the case.
- If the support group together with school cannot find a solution, cannot find a way to help the child and the parents, the case is handed over to the third level – Child Protection services and specialized support.

Municipality of Kopavogur

- It took 3 years to be qualified and getting the CFCI award from UNICEF.
- Before starting the CFCI project in the municipality, the implementation process of SDGs was ongoing. It was a challenge to work with all the divisions and take into account the SDGs and the CFCI and CRC (Child Right Convention).

- To open a house like this The Mental Health House it takes 3-5 years. It is important to be concentrated, focused and not to think too big.
- It is important to think into the future but divide the process into small, focused steps.
- Based on the core issues, the municipality developed a dashboard for data collection and systematization.
- The data showed that mental health of children and youth are getting worse. That's why the idea of The House of Mental Health was developed.
- The House offers courses for children that are dealing with anxiety, hyperactivity. The courses organized for three different age groups.
- Along with the courses, there are advisors who help children with their social skills, creating the boundaries, developing a connection with others.
- Children participation was a weakness, so 9 groups of children including migrant kids and ones with disabilities between ages 9-15 were gathered. Children were asked to express their opinion regarding the key issues.
- The idea for regular meetings with kids were offered, also children suggested that letters, e-mails or SMS could be sent to the town council, that there should be idea boxes at schools, and to use social media apps as a tool to connect with kids.
- A several steps program for more effective communication with children was developed:
  - Courses and training sessions for staff on how to listen to the children.
  - Discussions with kids within the school on what and where municipality could improve or change.
  - A meeting of children to discuss the most important questions and issues, to share the views and opinions.
  - A group of children together with the youth council met the town council and presented their suggestions. It is important that city council give a reflection to children regarding their questions and suggestions.
- Children have expressed a concern that every time they have an issue they must go to parents or guardians. That is why an app was developed, which allows children to contact the child services if they feel scared, bullied or have other issue at home.