



Curriculum Upskilling Course for Childcare Professionals

**Inclusion & Diversity: Culture, Gender
Identity and Sexual Orientation, and Trauma
in Early Childhood Education**



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Introduction

The Curriculum *Inclusion & Diversity: Culture, Gender and Trauma in Early Childhood Education* is designed to provide Continuous Vocational Education for professionals working in Early Childhood Education. This curriculum focuses on the vital theme of Inclusion & Diversity in Early Childhood Education, recognizing the dynamic nature of the field and the ongoing need for professional growth and development. Early Childhood Education refers to any regulated arrangement that provides education and care for children from birth to compulsory primary school age, which may vary across the EU (education.ec.europa.eu, n.d.). The importance of the Curriculum cannot be overstated. In today's diverse and ever-changing world, early childhood educators play a pivotal role in shaping the experiences and outcomes of young children. The curriculum shall be response to the diverse needs, among them:

- **Understanding of different social, cultural backgrounds**

Children come from various cultural backgrounds, have different gender identities, have experienced war or displacement and may have experienced trauma. Childcare professionals need to understand and respect these diversities to provide inclusive and supportive environments where every child feels valued and accepted.

- **Enhancing Cultural Competence**

Cultural competence is essential for effective teaching and caregiving. By upskilling in this area, childcare professionals can better understand the cultural contexts of the children and families they serve, leading to more meaningful and respectful interactions.

- **Promoting Equity**

Inclusive practices promote equity by ensuring that all children have access to high-quality care and education regardless of their background. By addressing issues related to culture, gender, and trauma, childcare professionals can work towards creating equitable learning environments where every child has an equal opportunity to thrive.

- **Supporting Gender Diversity**

Gender identity is a fundamental aspect of a child's identity. Childcare professionals need to be knowledgeable about gender diversity and equipped with strategies to support children in exploring and expressing their gender identity in a safe and affirming environment.

- **Addressing Trauma-Informed Care**

Many children may have experienced trauma, which can significantly influence their development and behaviour. Childcare professionals need to be trained in trauma-informed care to recognize the signs of trauma, provide appropriate support, and create environments that promote healing and resilience.



- **Professional Growth and Development**

Continuous education and upskilling are essential for professional growth and development. By participating in further education, childcare professionals have the opportunity to expand their knowledge, develop new skills, and stay updated on best practices in the field of early childhood education.

- **Creating Inclusive Communities**

Childcare professionals play a vital role in fostering inclusive communities where children, families, and educators feel respected, valued, and supported. By embracing diversity and inclusion, childcare settings can become welcoming spaces for everyone, promoting positive social interactions and relationships.

In this comprehensive program, we delve into the multifaceted dimensions of Inclusion & Diversity, with a particular emphasis on Culture, Gender and Sexual Orientation, and Trauma. We recognize the profound impact of these factors on a child's development and the crucial role educators play in fostering environments that celebrate differences, honour individual identities, and promote social and emotional well-being.

The curriculum is built upon secondary research and literature review of policy documentations in the EU. In 2019 the EU published the Council Recommendation on high quality early childhood education and care (ECEC). The document emphasizes that early childhood education and care have a pivotal role in “promoting learning of all children, their well-being and development” (p. 4) and can contribute to social cohesion by teaching children how to live together in a heterogeneous society, and let them “learn about their rights, equality, tolerance and diversity” (p. 5). The importance of highly qualified staff is reiterated in the Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education and Care (2014) that mentions “staff” as one of five key areas crucial for high-quality services in early childhood education (alongside with access, curriculum, monitoring and evaluation, and governance and funding). The European Toolkit for inclusive early childhood education and care “Providing high quality education and care to all young children” 2021, includes a set of practical solutions and measures to inspire ECEC policy makers at the national, regional or local level, as well as ECEC practitioners.

Additionally, the data collection on early childhood education including existing practices, working experiences in form of peer sessions and peer reviews was carried out among experts in partner organisations. The data collection included how the topic of inclusion & diversity is integrated in the organisation (mission/strategy), through which strategies is communicated, what methods and approaches are implemented to address the topic, how the topic is considered in a daily work of child care professionals and what additional offers for further education of professionals are offered. Moreover, in the context of subtopics: Culture, Gender and Sexual Orientation, and Trauma, the real situations referring to those subtopics were collected and discussed in a peer review processes.

The curriculum

An integral part of the curriculum is a training programme – Upskilling Course material offering valuable insights and practical strategies to support professional growth and enhance practice of professionals.

The curriculum and upskilling course have a modular structure and cover all relevant professional competencies as well as transversal skills for the childcare professionals. Each module related to the specific subtopic: culture, gender identity and sexual orientation, and trauma includes description of learning aim, learning outcomes, proposal of division of teaching units. The learning outcomes defined within this Curriculum represents the knowledge, skills and attitudes identified as optimal requisites early childcare professionals need to embody to effectively foster early childhood development. While the Upskilling Course cannot guarantee achievement of all specific outcomes, it serves as a valuable source of motivation and guidance for participants' further reading and learning endeavours, thereby empowering them to continually enhance their proficiency and impact in the field.

Throughout this course, participants will embark on an enriching journey, exploring key concepts, research-based strategies, and practical approaches to effectively address diversity, equity, and inclusion within early childhood settings. From understanding the nuances of cultural competence to navigating conversations around gender identity and sexual orientation, and supporting children who have experienced trauma, this curriculum equips professionals with the insights and skills needed to create nurturing and inclusive learning environments.

By investing in professional development in these areas, childcare professionals contribute to the holistic development and well-being of young children and lay the foundation for a more inclusive and compassionate society.

As a flexible tool, the Upskilling course can be implemented in various contexts:

- a) offered it as advanced training for teaching staff of universities and VET schools (to be incorporated it in study programs and VET training for future childcare professionals),
- b) offered as advanced training of childcare professionals working in kindergartens, primary schools, nursery schools, welfare services, etc.
- c) offered as advanced training for future childcare professionals, students in the fields of childcare education, psychology, social work, special education, etc.



Qualification Requirements

Participants

The Upskilling Course is carried out with approximately 10 – 16 participants and is recommended for individuals who possess a **minimum of a 4th level of the qualification in accordance with the European Qualifications Framework (EQF)¹.**

The course could significantly contribute to the enrichment of knowledge and skills of individuals qualified in the fields of childcare education, psychology, social work, primary education or special education. However, the course welcomes others experienced in childcare education or curious about methods and approaches to foster an inclusive environment among children and their families. Nevertheless, the course is open for individuals engaged in higher education programmes or having higher qualification levels (Bachelor/master) in related fields.

Trainers

To conduct the Upskilling course, a suitable trainer would ideally possess the combination of following qualification, knowledge and experience:

- **Educational background**
Completed a minimum first cycle of higher education process (Bachelor's or higher degree) in fields of education, psychology, social work, child development, or a related field.
- **Specialization or Training**
Specialization or additional training in areas such as cultural competency, gender studies, trauma-informed care, early childhood education, or related fields.
- **Experience in Early Childhood Education**
Prior experience working in early childhood education settings, such as preschools, day-cares, or early intervention programs, provides practical knowledge of working with young children and understanding their developmental needs.
- **Adult Education Experience**
Qualified in andragogy, didactics, and methodology to conduct educational work with adults (completed andragogic training program or previous experience in teaching

¹ COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION of 22 May 2017 on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning (2017/C 189/03), June 15 2017, Official Journal of the European Union, [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)&from=EN)

adults for a minimum of 3 years), i.e., demonstrate knowledge of the psychological functioning of adults, different learning styles, barriers, and resistance that may arise when acquiring new content

- **Other national standards**

The trainer competencies also must be in accordance to specific national standards, if any apply.

Based on these qualifications and experiences, potential trainers could include:

- Early childhood education specialists with experience in training delivery;
- Child psychologists or counsellors with expertise in trauma-informed care, child development and training delivery;
- Social workers with experience in working with children and families from diverse cultural backgrounds and experience in training delivery,
- Educators or trainers with specialized knowledge in gender studies, cultural competency, or related fields, who have experience in adult education settings.

Structure of the Upskilling Course

The course is organized into three modules, each carefully designed to target specific areas of professional development in early childcare education, including the topics of culture, gender identity, sexual orientation, and trauma.

Each module represents a separate entity with its own goal, learning outcomes, and can be implemented independently or as whole. By respecting the heterogeneity of the educational group involving adults with diverse experience, needs and learning styles, the curriculum fosters flexibility. This allows focus shifts and adjustments in module duration as necessary to accommodate individual learning styles and professional commitments.

In the following sections, an overview of the modules, corresponding topics and time structure is detailed described.



Modules

Module I: Culture

Main Learning Objective

To provide participants with the concepts of migration, cultural diversity and safety, equality, prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination as well as to introduce them with methods and techniques that can be used in early childcare education and care settings.

Main Learning Outcome

The professionals have embraced model of introspection and self-reflection related to cultural diversity and stereotypes, exhibiting both understanding and respect of cultural diversity and are able to maintain open and non-judgmental attitude, use proactive approach in building inclusive, supportive, accepting, emotionally, physically and socially safe learning environment for children of all cultures.

Professionals are driven by the concept of interculturality and are motivated to seek new methods and techniques to promote cultural diversity in and outside learning environment, encouraging cultural exchange, interaction and communication, seeing them as opportunity for community learning and growth.

Teaching Units and Hours

Module I		
	Teaching Units	Approx. number of teaching hours
1.	Recognizing, understanding and fostering equality and cultural diversity	2
2.	Aspects of migration and their influence on culture	2
3.	Overcoming stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination	2
4.	Valuing cultural safety	2
5.	Promoting opportunities provided by cultural diversity in practice	2
	TOTAL	10

Teaching Units and Outcomes

Teaching Units	Definition	Level of outcome	Outcomes <i>At the end of the teaching unit childcare professional will be able to...</i>
<p>1. Recognizing, understanding and fostering equality and cultural diversity</p>	<p>A childcare professional recognises, understands and respects cultural diversity among children. The professional perceives and treats all children, regardless of their cultural background, equally, valuing and providing them equal rights to engage, learn and grow. A childcare professional uses a proactive approach to build an inclusive and harmonious education environment where children are able to cooperate, build relations and respect cultural differences.</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● understand the concept of culture and cultural diversity ● identify basic information related to other cultures, traditions, and backgrounds ● explain the impact of cultural diversity on children's development and learning ● explain the concept of cultural equality in the context of childcare education ● recognise societal injustices and structural barriers that may hinder equal opportunities for all children related to their cultural background ● recognise own knowledge gaps concerning individual cultures
		<p>SKILLS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recognise diverse cultural backgrounds of the children in their care ● self-reflect in the context of work in intercultural education community ● explain the concept of culture in a child-friendly language. ● implement age appropriate activities with children to explore different cultures and express their cultural identity. ● seek information on each culture represented in the classroom, including traditions, values and communication styles, to provide personalised support
		<p>ATTITUDES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● respect the diverse cultural backgrounds of the children in their care and their families ● engage in open and respectful dialogue to learn from one another and bridge cultural divides ● foster opportunities for people from different backgrounds to interact and engage with one another ● respect unique perspectives and experiences that children from diverse cultures bring to the classroom ● appreciate the importance of cultural diversity in fostering a sense of belonging and inclusivity for all children



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● commit to provide each child equal opportunities for learning and development regardless of cultural background
2. Aspects of migration and their influence on culture	<p>A childcare professional understands the concept of migration and its influence on children and their families. A childcare professional recognises the effect of migration on a child's identity and socialisation. Therefore, it supports and nurtures identity formation and integration process by establishing a warm, welcoming and accepting environment.</p>	KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● define the concept of migration ● name different types of migration ● identify the causes of migration ● explain different changes an individual can experience when encountering a foreign culture (e.g. moving to a new country) ● identify the influence the migration has on children and their families ● describe the role and tasks of childcare professionals in supporting the integration process of a child from a migrant family ● identify challenges children and their families are facing in the migration process
		SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● provide support to families and children in intercultural interaction for increasing acceptance and respect of a new environment ● organize regular age-appropriate activities where children can share their migration experiences in a supportive and non-judgmental environment ● identify challenges a child faces in regards to cultural identity throughout its migration experience ● find relations between child's behaviour and attitudes with their migration experience ● cooperate with experts and institutions working in the areas that are beyond own capabilities to address identified challenges and provide appropriate support ● use positive reinforcement and encouragement to help build confidence and support the emotional well-being of migrant children
		ATTITUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● non-judgmentally listen to a child's stories related to its migration experience ● accept the diversity within the educational environment as a result of migration processes ● accept support and advice from experts in the areas that are beyond own capabilities ● provide flexibility and adaptability in order to respond to the changing needs and challenges associated with migration in early childhood education

3. Overcoming stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination	<p>A childcare professional is able to carry out teaching work without simplified beliefs, generalisations or preconceived ideas about other cultures, respecting the rights and obligations of all children and their families. The professional encourages and embraces individual's self-reflection, open and non-judgmental communication, and acceptance of cultural diversity.</p>	KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● define and differentiate the concepts of stereotype, prejudice and discrimination ● understand and describe how oppression, racism, discrimination and stereotyping affect an individual personally and professionally ● identify different types of stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination by using examples ● recognise causes and consequences of prejudices and stereotypes ● define different strategies to address challenges arising from prejudices and stereotypes in the context of childcare education
		SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● assist solving children's' conflicts caused by prejudices and stereotypes ● distinguish cultural and individuals differences to avoid making generalisations or assumptions about children ● introduce the topic of prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination in a child-friendly language ● organise activities to close knowledge gaps and reduce misunderstandings in the context of prejudices and stereotypes ● organise activities to support children reflect on their attitudes and beliefs toward other cultures ● provide children with real-life examples of situations contrary to stereotypes ● critically approach learning content and materials and recognise hidden messages related to prejudices and stereotypes ● use self-reflective techniques to raise awareness of own stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination
		ATTITUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● promote education and awareness about the harmful effects of stereotypes and prejudices and discrimination ● encourage the development of critical thinking skills that enable individuals to question stereotypes and prejudices ● objectively approach to conflict related situations caused by prejudices and stereotypes ● encourage empathy and perspective-taking by encouraging individuals to put themselves in the shoes of others ● lead by example by challenging stereotypes and prejudices with your own words and actions

4. Valuing cultural safety	<p>A childcare professional encourages and establishes an emotionally, physically and socially safe learning environment for children of all cultures. A professional respects each child's cultural background and enables all children to form their cultural identity and cherish their own uniqueness, without the fear of judgement and discrimination.</p>	KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● define the concept of cultural safety in the context of childcare education ● identify possible learning and socialisation barriers of children with different cultural background ● describe techniques and methods in addressing learning and socialisation barriers of children with different cultural background ● explain the importance of children's sharing and expressing of own emotions towards multicultural learning environment ● explain the role of positive learning atmosphere in creating a sense of cultural safety ● recognise the role of childcare professionals in creating a sense of cultural safety in a learning environment
		SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recognise learning and socialisation barriers the children with different cultural background are facing, when they appear ● organise activities enabling children to express and share their emotions towards multicultural learning environment ● find and learn some words in the child's native language to facilitate communication and understanding ● find creative solutions supporting language acquisition of migrant children ● apply culturally sensitive approaches to discipline, ensuring that consequences are consistent with the child's cultural background ● modify the childcare environment to accommodate diverse cultural practices (e.g. dietary needs) ● implement culturally responsive teaching strategies that promote the learning and development of all children ● create a learning environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all cultures
		ATTITUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● appreciate (respect) the diverse cultural backgrounds and experiences of the children and families in the childcare setting ● accept and respect the unique cultural practices and beliefs of each child and family ● highlight the importance of cultural sensitivity in creating an inclusive environment for all children ● accept the responsibility to create a classroom environment that is welcoming and inclusive of all cultures ● demonstrate cultural sensitivity in interactions with children, families, and staff

<p>5. Promoting opportunities provided by cultural diversity in practice</p>	<p>Driven by the concept of interculturality, a childcare professional seeks for new methods and techniques to promote cultural diversity in and outside the learning environment. A childcare professional is able to use their own creative mind to encourage cultural exchange, interaction and communication, seeing them as an opportunity for community learning and growth.</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● recognise elements of the education programme that are flexible and enable the integration of cultural topics and activities ● explain the importance of creativity in the context of cultural exchange and understanding ● name creative teaching methods and techniques for encouraging cultural sharing and mutual respect ● explain the importance of cross-sectoral cooperation (e.g. associations, authorities) to address cultural diversity among children and their families ● identify potential partners in the community to support cultural sharing and exchange in childcare education ● recognise the need for own professional education and training to address cultural changes
		<p>SKILLS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● develop constructive social relations between groups and individuals representing different cultural backgrounds ● organise events and activities that celebrate cultural diversity and foster cross-cultural understanding among children ● use creative techniques (e.g. drama, art) to encourage cultural understanding and sharing among children in an engaging way ● organise field trips to visit cultural institutions and events ● design projects fostering cultural diversity and exchange ● select culturally relevant books, songs, and activities to incorporate into the childcare curriculum ● stay up-to-date with new teaching techniques and methods in the context of intercultural education
		<p>ATTITUDES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● become aware of own limitations in organising education in an intercultural community ● promote cultural exchange and learning opportunities that facilitate the sharing of knowledge, skills, and experiences across cultural boundaries ● support initiatives that bring diverse communities together through cultural festivals, events, and community projects that celebrate cultural heritage and promote intercultural dialogue ● value continuous professional education and training to address dynamic cultural changes

			<ul style="list-style-type: none">• welcome innovative teaching techniques and methods
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Module II: Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation

Main Learning Objective

Equip childcare professionals with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes necessary to foster inclusive environments that respect and celebrate diverse gender identities and sexual orientations. This includes effectively communicating with families, addressing biases and stereotypes, promoting anti-bias education, creating emotionally supportive spaces, and utilizing inclusive practices to ensure the well-being and development of all children.

Main Learning Outcome

The professionals have understanding of gender identities and sexual orientations, are aware of their own internal beliefs and in communication with children and families exhibits empathy, trust, inclusivity, safety and open communication. They effectively promote inclusion and prevent discrimination, specifically related to gender identity and sexual orientation, by recognizing and addressing bias, encouraging communication, practicing positive role models and resolving conflict effectively. They are able to create safe and emotionally supportive learning environments for all children.

Teaching Units and Hours

Module II	
Teaching Units	Approx. number of teaching hours
1. Understanding the differences between gender identity and sexual orientation	2
2. Making different sexual orientations and gender identities legitimate within families	2
3. A shift of understanding: from prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination to respect	3
4. Methods of providing an emotionally supportive environment	3
TOTAL	10



Teaching Units and Outcomes

Teaching Units	Definition	Level of outcome	Outcomes <i>At the end of the teaching unit childcare professionals will be able to...</i>
<p>1. Understanding the differences between gender identity and sexual orientation</p>	<p>A childcare professional should understand that gender identity and sexual orientation are two distinct, but related, aspects of self: gender as personal and sexual orientation as interpersonal. The professional should have knowledge about different identities and orientations, be able to promote inclusion inside and outside of educational settings and check its own internal beliefs to avoid passing stereotyped implicit and explicit messages to children and families.</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand gender identity as an individual's deeply-felt sense of being male, female, both, neither, or somewhere along the gender spectrum • understand sexual orientation as the enduring pattern of romantic or sexual attraction, which may not fully emerge until adolescence. • list diversity of gender identities beyond the binary of male and female • explain how children may explore and express their gender identity in various ways • distinct between gender identity and biological sex, recognizing that gender identity is internal and may or may not align with assigned sex at birth. • identify the social and cultural factors that influence the development and expression of gender identity and sexual orientation, including norms, stereotypes, and discrimination. • define the most important national and international laws and resolutions on the topic
		<p>SKILLS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respond to children's questions related to gender identity and sexual orientation topics in a child-friendly language. • research on cultural differences in gender roles to understand children's background and behaviour. • Continuously check own knowledge on these topics • Actively work to overcome knowledge gaps through research and education
		<p>ATTITUDES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect for the self-determination and autonomy of children in exploring and expressing their gender identity and sexual orientation, recognizing their agency in defining their identities. • remain open and flexible to the potential evolution/changes of gender identities and sexual orientations • encourage children to embrace diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations • consider each child's background (e.g. family, culture) talking about gender identity and sexual orientation



2. Making different sexual orientations and gender identities legitimate within families	<p>A childcare professional should be able to communicate the topics of gender identity and sexual orientation with family members. The professional should use effective communication strategies to face families' resistance on these topics while at the same time checking its own biases. The professional should be informed and inform families about stereotypes and prejudices and their influence on the wellbeing of children and their future development.</p>	KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● identify appropriate communication strategies when interacting with families. ● identify main defence mechanisms and resistances that families could enact. ● explain the impact of family dynamics, cultural norms, religious beliefs, and societal attitudes on the acceptance and affirmation of diverse sexual orientations and gender identities within families. ● understand the potential challenges, barriers and consequences that LGBTIQ+ individuals may face within family and social systems
		SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● open a space with family members to provide relevant information and discuss different gender identities and sexual orientation ● support parents and caregivers in affirming and validating their children's gender identity and sexual orientation ● provide resources and guidance for fostering positive communication and acceptance within the family. ● use conflict resolution techniques to address family disagreements regarding acceptance. ● carry out different procedures when encountering non-tolerant behaviour of family members against different sexual orientations and gender identities of other children and their families. ● organise different activities engaging family members to introduce the topic of gender identity and sexual orientation. ● act as a mediator during the interaction between a child and family members around the topic of gender identity and sexual orientation.
		ATTITUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● encourage open and honest communication between family members. ● not to express judgments or personal opinions when interacting with families and their children. ● cultivate an atmosphere of security and trust for the parent or caregiver ● promote equality, dignity, and respect for all family members, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, and advocating for inclusive family environments that celebrate diversity. ● empathise towards family members who may be struggling to accept or understand LGBTIQ+ identities. ● recognise that change and growth require patience and support.

<p>3. A shift of understanding: from prejudices, stereotypes and discrimination to respect</p>	<p>Childcare professionals should effectively promote inclusion and prevent discrimination. This includes understanding gender identity and sexual orientation, recognizing and addressing bias, encouraging communication, practicing positive role models, and resolving conflict effectively. By proactively addressing these issues, childcare professionals can create safe and supportive learning environments for all children.</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● define the terms prejudice, stereotype and discrimination in the context of gender identity and sexual orientation. ● explain the effects of prejudices and gender stereotyping in the development of children. ● describe the role of gender bias in language. ● explain the various forms of discrimination and prejudice that LGBTIQ+ individuals and families may encounter, including verbal harassment, social exclusion, institutional bias, and violence. ● explain the psychological and emotional impact of discrimination and prejudices on LGBTIQ+ individuals and families ● describe diverse lived experiences of individuals with different gender identities and sexual orientation that are opposite to stereotypes
		<p>SKILLS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● raise awareness of prejudice and stereotypes in everyday pedagogical work. ● evaluate personal biases including linguistic bias to ensure that interactions with children are fair, equitable, and respectful. ● create affirming and inclusive environments for children to explore and express their gender identity and sexual orientation without fear of judgement or discrimination. ● use curriculum materials that reflect the diversity, ensuring that all children feel represented and included. ● analyse and modify teaching and learning materials to positively respond to gender diversity. ● facilitate age-appropriate discussions and activities on gender diversity for children, using language and examples that are developmentally appropriate and inclusive. ● challenge gender norms and address instances of gender-based discrimination or bias in children's interactions, using teachable moments to promote empathy, understanding, and respect.
		<p>ATTITUDES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● encourage critical thinking about justice and fairness in the context of diversity of gender identities and sexual orientations. ● consider and respect each child's background talking about gender prejudices and stereotypes. ● be determinate in confronting discrimination and prejudice, recognizing that change requires persistence, collaboration, and collective action.

4. Methods of providing an emotionally supportive environment	<p>Childcare professionals should be able to create an emotionally supportive environment where individuals feel safe, valued and respected, and where they can express their emotions without fear of judgement or criticism. In their practices, they take into account the importance of validation, empathy, trust, inclusivity, safety and open communication. They provide individualised support to all children and anti-bias education based on inclusive pedagogy through the use of inclusive play, language and materials, from neutral dress codes to inclusive curricula. They rely on anti-bullying policies, continuous learning and external expert support, when needed.</p>	KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● explain the role of childcare professionals in establishing emotionally supportive and safe environment that values gender diversity. ● stay up-to-date with relevant gender vocabulary and inclusive teaching methods. ● describe the needs of gender nonconforming or LGBTIQ+ children and ways of supporting them ● identify resources and support networks for LGBTIQ+ children and their families, including affirming healthcare providers, school counselors, and LGBTIQ+ youth organizations.
		SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● create a safe space where LGBTIQ+ children can be themselves without fear of judgment or discrimination using different methods (e.g. inclusive language, displaying gender diversity and LGBTIQ+-affirming materials, and providing access to resources that support their identity). ● apply strategies to make children feel comfortable with themselves and each other and be able to develop friendships based on their shared interests. ● seek support from colleagues or professional organizations when addressing complex issues related to discrimination due to gender stereotyping. ● apply in crisis intervention techniques to address immediate safety concerns and provide support to individuals and families in crisis due to discrimination or harassment. ● listen to children and validate their experiences to help them feel heard and supported.
		ATTITUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● promote an emotionally safe environment, where everyone is invited to participate as much as they want and everyone is treated with respect and kindness. ● encourage a sense of community, where each person is valued as a unique individual who has something to contribute and where everyone is responsible for caring for each other. ● Embrace diversity and challenge own biases in relation to LGBTIQ+ individuals and families ● promote equal educational contexts speaking out against discrimination and supporting policies that promote equality, connecting families and children to resources such as support groups, counseling services, and LGBTIQ+-friendly healthcare providers.

Module III: Trauma

Main Learning Objective

To equip childcare professionals with the knowledge, skills, and mindset necessary to effectively understand and address trauma, especially in contexts of forced displacement. This includes imparting comprehensive understanding of trauma, diverse family crises, and trauma-informed practices, while emphasizing cultural sensitivity and ethical considerations. Trainers aim to foster empathy, resilience, and self-care practices among childcare professionals, enabling them to establish trusting relationships and provide tailored support to traumatized children and families.

Main Learning Outcome

A childcare professional demonstrates comprehensive understanding and sensitivity towards trauma, particularly related to forced displacement, by recognizing diverse factors influencing family crises and applying trauma-informed practices. They establish trusting relationships with children and families, providing tailored support while maintaining cultural sensitivity. Through self-awareness and resilience-building, they ensure both the well-being of themselves and the children and families they serve.

Teaching Units and Teaching Hours

Module III		
	Teaching Units	Approx. number of teaching hours
1.	Understanding of trauma and its consequences, patterns of behaviour and symptoms developed by children	2
2.	Context and trauma caused by forced displacement	2
3.	Understanding Family in crisis	2
4.	Establishing trust and empathic relationship with traumatised children and families	2
5.	The importance of self-awareness and self-care of professionals	2
	TOTAL	10



Teaching Units and Outcomes

Teaching Units	Definition	Level of outcome	Outcomes <i>At the end of the teaching unit childcare professional will be able to...</i>
1. Understanding of trauma and its consequences, patterns of behaviour and symptoms developed by children	A childcare professional understands the concept of trauma and has developed sensibility to perceive trauma impact and consequences with children. A childcare professional is able to recognize symptoms and patterns of behaviours developed by children due to trauma, and apply trauma-informed practices to create a safe and supportive environment for children affected by trauma, all by following ethical guidelines in respecting the dignity and rights of children.	KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● define what trauma is and compare different types of trauma (physical abuse, sexual abuse, neglect, domestic violence, natural disasters, and community violence) ● understand the neurobiological impact of trauma on the developing brain, including how exposure to adversity can affect cognitive, emotional, and behavioural functioning. ● identify common symptoms of trauma exhibited by children (differentiate between acute and chronic trauma responses) ● list the potential triggers for trauma reactions in children and describe their impact on behaviour ● explain factors that contribute to the resilience of children in the face of trauma ● categorize patterns of behaviour that may arise as a result of trauma in children
		SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● utilize effective observation skills to identify and document trauma-related behaviours in children ● apply trauma-informed practices to create a safe and supportive environment for children affected by trauma ● adapt communication styles to effectively engage with children displaying trauma-related behaviours ● create and implement mentally appropriate activities for children that promote resilience and coping skills ● apply interdisciplinary approach to support the healing process of children affected by trauma by cooperating with professionals and experts in trauma-informed practice ● check immediate needs and emergencies and provide referrals to external experts

		<p>ATTITUDES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • respect the individual differences in children's responses to trauma, recognizing the need for personalized approaches • demonstrate empathy towards children experiencing trauma, recognising their challenges, strengths and inherent worth. • demonstrate patience in working with children who may exhibit challenging behaviours as a result of trauma • support and actively engage in initiatives that promote the resilience and strength-building of children impacted by trauma • value collaboration with parents, caregivers, and other professionals, recognizing the importance of a united approach to supporting traumatized children • support a strengths-based approach, focusing on identifying and building upon the strengths and positive qualities of children affected by trauma • follow ethical guidelines in maintaining confidentiality and respecting the dignity and rights of children affected by trauma
<p>2. Context and trauma caused by forced displacement</p>	<p>A childcare professional is able to understand the trauma caused by forced displacement. A childcare professional approaches each child experiencing trauma holistically, understanding the context of its trauma and implementing tailored methods and strategies responding to its psychological, social, and emotional needs.</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describe the reasons for forced displacement (war, persecution, poverty..). • understand how forced displacement affects a person generally • explain the major consequences of forced displacement on a child's psychosocial functioning. • describe the concept of sequential traumatization (trigger, escape, arrival). • list available resources, services, and support networks for displaced individuals and communities
		<p>SKILLS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • research, collect information and facts about current events related to forced displacement and migration in order to be familiar with the experiences of children • answer children's questions regarding events and circumstances linked to forced displacement in a child-friendly language. • explain trauma and its consequences in a child-friendly language. • cooperate with internal and external experts providing a support system for displaced children and families
		<p>ATTITUDES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reflect on own behaviours and attitudes towards people affected by forced displacement. • provide compassion rather than pity towards the experiences of displaced children and families, recognizing their resilience and strengths. • being open to learning from diverse perspectives and lived experiences • show flexibility to adapt to unexpected situations due to events caused by forced displacement

<p>3. Understanding Family in crisis</p>	<p>A childcare professional recognizes diverse factors influencing family crises and understands the trauma's impact on children and families during the crises, including signs of distress and crisis phases. Applying methods that are sensitive to trauma, a childcare professional ensures effective interaction among children and an inclusive and supporting environment. Having cultural sensitivity and respecting uniqueness of family dynamics, a childcare professional efficiently communicates with family and is involved in identifying and accessing relevant community resources and collaborating with various professionals to ensure a comprehensive and tailored support to family.</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognize diverse cultural and socio-economic factors that may influence family crises. List and differentiate elements contributing to a family crisis. Identify and describe phases of a crisis in a family. list signs/effects of crisis experienced by family members
		<p>SKILLS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assess relevant information about the family's history, dynamics, and current challenges to inform intervention strategies. Apply active listening skills when engaging with families in crisis to understand their concerns and needs. Collect relevant information about community resources and services that can benefit families in crisis. Provide information on resources, and support for the well-being of children in crisis. Collaborate with other professionals, such as therapists and counsellors and others to provide multidisciplinary support to families in crisis. Engage children and families in open, non-judgmental, and culturally responsive conversations, building rapport and trust.
		<p>ATTITUDES</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Appreciate the uniqueness of individual experiences and challenges faced by children from families in crisis Acknowledge and value family dynamics, respecting the diverse structures and coping mechanisms that families employ during crises. Follow trauma-informed principles, recognizing and responding to the unique emotional needs of children affected by family crises Acknowledge and respect the lasting impact of trauma on children and families fostering a compassionate and supportive attitude in interactions. Value the input and perspectives of children and families in crisis, actively involving them in decision-making processes regarding their well-being Dispute stigmas and stereotypes associated with families in crisis, promoting a positive and inclusive environment for all children.
<p>4. Establishing trust and empathic</p>	<p>A childcare professional understands the importance of establishing and maintaining a relationship of trust and empathy with trauma-impacted children and their families. A childcare professional is aware of the importance of recognizing and expressing human emotions and needs</p>	<p>KNOWLEDGE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> understand the importance of empathy and trust for building and maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships with (traumatized) children and families list people's pleasant and unpleasant feelings - enrich the feelings vocabulary list and understand the diversity of people's universal needs - enrich the needs vocabulary describe the difference between needs and strategies (ways to satisfy needs, desires) identify the words that contain hidden judgments, criticisms, interpretations etc. and distinguish them from facts

relationship with traumatised children and families	<p>and the power of empathy to establish healthy interpersonal relationships, which support traumatised children in gaining trust and feeling of safety. A childcare professional's behaviour demonstrates a calm and mindful attitude both in challenging, difficult situations and in everyday situations in its work with children and their families.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> list different strategies and methods supporting children's empowerment, self-confidence and dignity regainment
		SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> use active and authentic listening as a technique for better understanding of the words and behaviour of (traumatized) children and families modify own words and reactions - use words not as automatic reactions, but as a mindful respond specifically when communicating with traumatised children give them space to express themselves in an adequate way instead of repressing and restraining them consciously choose words that encourage and ensure an empathetic relationship and a relationship of trust, especially when working with traumatised children create and maintain a relationship that supports mutual understanding, appreciation, respect and safety when working with children with trauma recognise, understand and adequately control own emotional reactions when interacting with children and families
		ATTITUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> be aware of own prejudices and their influence on blocking relationships of trust and empathy with traumatised children and families differentiate own feelings from the feelings of other people differentiate own needs from the needs of others embrace vulnerability - the ability to openly express own emotions and needs as a basis for an empathetic relationship with traumatised children embrace and follow their "internal radar of feelings and needs" - a way of establishing relationships with traumatised children in which they "hear behind the spoken words" and understand behind the behaviour perceive challenging and difficult situations with children with trauma as opportunities to improve interpersonal relationships, establish trust and empathy demonstrate a calm and mindful attitude in everyday situations, especially in challenging and conflict ones
5. The importance of self-awareness and self-	<p>A childcare professional has the ability to focus on own physical and mental health and to timely recognise the impact of work situations on own emotions and behaviours. Self-reflection results in implementing different coping strategies and methods aimed at increasing childcare</p>	KNOWLEDGE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Understand the potential impact of secondary traumatic stress (STS) or vicarious trauma on professionals who work with traumatized children and their families, including symptoms such as emotional exhaustion, intrusive thoughts, and reduced empathy. Define the principles of self-awareness and self-care, including recognizing personal triggers, boundaries, and signs of burnout, and understanding the importance of setting realistic expectations and seeking support when needed. Describe ethical and professional responsibilities of maintaining one's own well-being as a prerequisite for providing effective and ethical care to others.

care of professionals	professional's resilience against challenges arising from their professional and personal life experience.	SKILLS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● practice mindfulness and self-reflection techniques to enhance self-awareness, regulate emotions, and manage stress effectively. ● manage time and maintain a healthy work-life balance and prevent compassion fatigue and burnout. ● communicate needs and boundaries effectively, both with colleagues and with children and their families, and to advocate for necessary support and resources. ● utilize self-care strategies and resources, such as regular exercise, hobbies, social support networks, supervision, and professional development opportunities. ● recognize when personal issues may be affecting professional performance ● seek appropriate support and intervention when needed
		ATTITUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● accept own emotions, attitudes and perception. ● openly discuss personal emotions and needs with others. ● objectively assess own behaviour and emotions. ● proactively deal with challenging situations in everyday work. ● question own behaviour, emotions and perceptions. ● recognise and accept the limits of own competences, expertise and responsibilities. ● pay attention to the well-being of team members. ● prioritize self-care as an essential component of ethical practice and responsible caregiving. ● accept own limitations and vulnerabilities, recognizing that seeking help and support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

Duration and time structure

The envisaged duration of the Upskilling Course is 30 academic hours. The duration of each of the three modules can vary based on the unique requirements of professionals in different national contexts, ensuring flexibility to accommodate varying schedules and learning paces (see table below).

While the modules can have equal durations, they are also adaptable to meet the specific needs and preferences of participants, allowing for a personalized learning experience. Flexibility is built into the Upskilling course design, allowing for the customization of module durations to best serve the needs and priorities of local professionals in the field of early childcare.

The duration of one teaching hour is 45 minutes. It is planned for the course to be delivered through lecture methods (maximum 20% of the teaching process or 6 teaching hours) and other interactive methods and techniques (minimum 80% or 24 hours), which are combined and optimally used in workshop format. The teaching units are proposed to be delivered in blocks of at least four teaching hours per day, and a maximum of eight teaching hours per day. The teaching units can be delivered in block hours of a maximum two teaching hours without a break.

Modules		Approx. number of teaching hours
I	Culture	10
II	Gender Identity and Sexual Orientation	10
III	Trauma	10
TOTAL		30



Teaching Approach

Within the modules, the trainer is expected to cover all of the planned teaching units.

The Upskilling course is directed towards participants, which presupposes aligning the work methods with the educational needs, expectations, and learning styles of the participants. The focus is on functional knowledge applicable in working with children in early childcare education setting.

The Upskilling course is to be conducted through an interactive working model, respecting all **andragogic principles** and basic principles for managing group dynamic in adult education. Main elements of andragogic principles are: prioritize giving learners the autonomy to make their own choices, incorporating practical hands-on experiences, ensuring relevance to their lives and work, connecting to their past experiences, engaging all senses in the learning process, providing ample opportunities for practice, considering individual development goals, and involving learners in the planning and evaluation process to empower them in their learning journey (Knowles, MS., 1975). Overall, the key is to create a dynamic and personalized learning environment that caters to the diverse needs and preferences of adult learners.

It is recommended to conduct the teaching using **lecture method** (maximum 20% of the teaching process) and other **interactive methods and techniques** (minimum 80% of the teaching process):

- **Lecture**

Lecture as a method will be used to provide information, present main theoretical concepts and ideas, or provide a theoretical framework, explanation, and summary of the presented content. The lecture, or presentation of theoretical foundations, is planned to last a maximum of 20 minutes continuously. The trainer should use relevant examples for theoretical foundations and personal experiences that facilitate the application of knowledge in practical work. During this part, the trainer should encourage participants' activity through questions that motivate participants to express their own views and values, as well as exchange experiences.

- **Interactive Methods and Techniques**

This refers to the teaching approach that emphasizes the learning as an active construction of knowledge through one's own activity, experience, and exchange. This implies using various methods to enable and stimulate participant activity; connecting with participants' experiences (building on experience and practical application); exchanging among participants (group discussions, group task solving, project assignments); different group dynamics (individual work, pair work, small group work).



It suggests the use of different training methods that cater to individual learning styles; elaboration of the same topic (content) through various methods and individualization of the learning process considering differences in learning capacity (Alibabić et al., 2016).

When using activities and interactive work methods, the trainer must take into account the following factors: general and specific objectives and outcomes of the Upskilling course and teaching units, educational, personal and professional background of participants, group characteristics and dynamics, diversity of methods and techniques, technical/material conditions for conducting teaching, own skills for implementing techniques/methods, etc.

Evaluation of the Upskilling course

In order to ensure the quality of Upskilling course implementation, evaluation is to be conducted. The primary purpose of evaluation is to provide feedback on the strengths and weaknesses of the program, identify areas for improvement related to the curriculum design, implementation, and resource allocation. It involves systematically gathering and analysing data to determine whether the course has achieved its intended outcomes and objectives.

The evaluation will be carried out to gather information from participants about their experience and perception of the program: to determine achieved outcomes and participants' satisfaction with organizational-technical issues, didactic-methodical issues, working atmosphere, and professional work in teaching.

Evaluation will be conducted at the **end of each module** as well as at the **end of the entire course**.

Participants can also be assessed before and after processing one or more teaching units to determine the degree of knowledge acquisition and outcomes for one or more teaching units.

Evaluation form template is available within Upskilling Course materials and should be adjusted to each Course implementation by the trainer.

Certificate of Attendance

Upon successful completion of the Upskilling course's one or more modules, participants are awarded a *Certificate of attendance*. The certificate can be awarded to participants who attended a minimum of 80% of the teaching hours of each module.

The Certificate of Attendance must include a short description of learning outcomes. The Certificate template is attached to this document.



Equipment

In addition, for carrying out the Upskilling Course, basic didactic equipment is necessary:

- video projector and personal computer/smart TV device
- flip chart paper and board
- materials/handouts
- moderation cards
- stickers
- scissors
- markers, etc.

In the Upskilling Course, a detailed list of equipment required for individual activities is provided.



Reference

- Alibabić, Š., Popović, K., Avdagić, E., (2012). Naknadno sticanje osnovnog obrazovanja - Andragoški priručnik za nastavnike (Acquiring Basic Education Later in Life - Andragogical Manual for Teachers), Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH.
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- Knowles, MS. (1975). Self-directed learning: a guide for learners and teachers, Association Press.
- COUNCIL RECOMMENDATION on the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning and repealing the recommendation of the European Parliament and of the Council on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework for lifelong learning, (June 15 2017), Available at: [https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615\(01\)&from=EN](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/HTML/?uri=CELEX:32017H0615(01)&from=EN)





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