



**THE NET FOR U
PRACTITIONERS'
TOOLKIT FOR
WORKING WITH
UNACCOMPANIED
MINORS**



DG Home Affairs
Directorate B Immigration and Asylum



The Net For U Practitioners' Toolkit, part of the EU co-financed Net For U project HOME/2011/EIFX/CA/1991 (European Commission Directorate-General Home Affairs Directorate B: Immigration and Asylum, UNIT B4: Financial Support – Immigration and Asylum), has been realized by the Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research with the cooperation of the partners and of all the different involved stakeholders.

First, this tool was drafted on the basis of the national reports and material provided by the project partners coming from different Eu Countries (France, Italy, Germany, Greece, Spain and the UK), by available European and international literature, and inputs of the experts that participated in the Net For U Experts Seminar held in London on October 28th-29th, 2013.

The final version is a substantial tool created also thanks to the strong cooperation of all the operators who implemented the Net FOR U experimental phase giving their critical points of view that helped the partnership to revise and define better some parts.

Net FOR U is coordinated by Istituto Don Calabria and carried out in partnership with: Association Diagrama Intervencion Psicosociale, Christian Association of Youth Villages, Europeace Youth, The Smile of the Child Association, Fundacion Diagrama Intervencion Psicosocial, International Juvenile Justice Observatory, and Psychoanalytic Institute for Social Research.





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USING THE TOOLKIT

The Net For U Toolkit is designed to go hand in hand with the Net For U Practitioners' Manual.

The Toolkit offers practitioners some practical instruments and exercises intended to help them in assessing the needs and potential of unaccompanied minors in order to develop and implement life project that can effectively help the minor transition into an independent and stable adulthood.

As suggested from the operators who took part to the experimental phase, so testing this tool, it's necessary include a process of local contestualization before implementing all the suggested actions.

It's important to emphasize that some parts, mainly of the exercises, could appear as "repetition" but the intent has been to offer different typologies of "hints" for the daily work with Unaccompanied Minors respecting and reminding key elements inside the three parts. Moreover practitioners are encouraged to rely on their existing knowledge and skills in using the Toolkit.

The Annexes that follow are not intended to be exhaustive but represent a starting point for developing life projects and other interventions that make the most of family resources while operating in the best interests of the child, specifically:

1st part - The Toolkit begins with exercises to address the myth-reality balance discussed in the Manual, both in regards to the minor and his or her family and the practitioners (Annex 1);

2nd part - The following part is dedicated to the collection and use of information about the minor and his or her family (Annex 2 - 5). It should be noted that Annex 2 is provided in two versions: Annex 2a comprises a complete case study report and assessment; Annex 2b only covers the family assessment and can be used in conjunction with other needs assessments that you are already using. Annexes 3 and 4 should be used to help collect information for the previous two mentioned annexes. Profiles and data should be reassessed on an as-needed basis when new information becomes available;

3rd part - The last one, Annex 6, focuses on the practitioner, as an individual and as part of a team. The series of proposed questions and considerations represent a starting point to increase practitioners' awareness and stimulate discussion and exchange.





ANNEX 1 – BALANCING MYTH AND REALITY

This section includes two exercises that can be used to better understand and address the myth-reality balance.

Exercise A is intended as a group discussion exercise with multiple minors while **Exercise B** is based on information matrices that can be used in conjunction with the previous exercise.

Exercise A - “Understanding Transit Country and Dream Country Myths in a Group”

(Note: This exercise assumes that the minors and practitioner speak the same language. Alternatively a trusted cultural/linguistic mediator needs to be included in the group. The exercise may also be modified for one-on-one work with an individual minor.)

Divide the minors into pairs and ask each them to describe their expectations and ideas of the transit country to their partner, especially in relation to housing, employment and education opportunities. The partner will then report back to the entire group after which the entire group will address and discuss the different points of the view. The facilitator should ask other group participants what they think of the different views and whether their experiences conform with the “myth”.

The same exercise can be repeated for the minor’s view of his/her family’s expectations and view for both the transit country and dream country(ies). This can be followed by a discussion about the difference between the minor’s view and the family’s view.





Exercise B - "Myth Reality Matrix"

Create a myth-reality matrix for the minor, the family (or key family members) and yourself. Information about family/family members can be gathered from the minor (in this case it would be the minor's perception of the family's expectations or from practitioner contact with these individuals if applicable.

These matrices represent a starting point for understanding not only where each individual is now (and hence potential sources of misunderstanding and conflict), but also where and how to intervene in order to ensure a beneficial myth-reality balance. (It should also be recognized that reality is to some extent always subjective.) The matrix below is indicative of some of the areas that may be relevant. Practitioners can adjust this as deemed appropriate. The information can be used to help direct the work with the minor and/or his or her family and as a tool to help the practitioner increase awareness.

After having completed more than one matrix, the practitioner may compare them as a means for gathering information (without involving the minor) or use them with the minor as a focus of discussion.

Myth-Reality Matrix [Minor]

	Myth	"Reality"
Educational possibilities		
Work possibilities		
Housing availability		
Support from ethnic, national, religious. or family networks		
Other		

Myth Reality Matrix [Family Members]

	Myth	"Reality"
Educational possibilities		
Work possibilities		
Housing availability		
Support from ethnic, national, religious. or family networks		
Other		





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Myth Reality Matrix [Practitioner]

	Myth	"Reality"
Educational possibilities		
Work possibilities		
Housing availability		
Support from ethnic, national, religious. or family networks		
Other		





ANNEX 2 – CASE STUDY REPORT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PLAN

Annex 2a - "Full Case Study Report and Family Involvement Plan"¹

The information below, confidential and only be used as part of the minor's case file, comes from the following sources: documents analysis, interviews, telephone calls, Police technical reports, Social Services, contact with other centres, etc.

This report is composed by five parts related to the **minor's** situation.

1. Personal details and initial information about documents, situation before arrival and previous collocations.

2. Socio-family area that examines: family details and history, situation and dynamics, possible contacts.

3. Adaptation to the centre (or any facilities) analyzing the minor's adaptation and habits.

4. Personal area focusing on psychological analysis and competence, actual-future prospects and family connections.

5. Education and training area with an in-depth analysis on: school, training and employment situation.

CASE STUDY REPORT AND FAMILY INVOLVEMENT PLAN²

DATE STARTED:

LAST UPDATED:

¹ Annex 3 and Annex 4 can be used to help collect information.

² *This report is property of Fundacion Diagrama Intervencion Psicosocial and it is a tool used in its educational centres.*





1. PERSONAL DETAILS.

Name:
Surnames:
Date of birth:
Age:
Passport no/ID:
Telephone:
Origin country:
Family address in [COUNTRY]:
Family address in the country of origin:
Contact telephone number:
Legal situation:
Date of arrival in [COUNTRY]:
Date of arrival in the centre:
Centre:
Address:

1.1. CENTRES WHERE THE MINOR HAS BEEN BEFORE

Centre:
Type:
Place:
Contact person:

1.2. DOCUMENTATION UPON ADMISSION TO THE CENTRE

Identification	NO	YES	Number	Provided		
				NO	Original	Photocopy
NIE (Foreigner Identification Number)						
Passport No.						
Residence allowance						
Civil registry						
Social Security						

1.3. DOCUMENTATION TO BE OBTAINED

Registration
Passport
Residence allowance
Health card
Others (specify)





1.4. SITUATION OF THE MINOR BEFORE ARRIVING IN [COUNTRY]

(Occupation, activities carried out, drug abuse history, peer relationships, interests, motivations)

Political situation of the country
Social context in which he/she was living
Socio-economic level
Education
Religion
Social network
Means of arrival
Peer group
Drug abuse history

2. SOCIO-FAMILY AREA

2.1. FAMILY DETAILS

Name	Blood kinship (or other significant relationship)	Age	Civil status	Current occupation	Address

2.2. RELATIVES IN [COUNTRY]/EUROPE

Number of people
Blood kinship
Relationship
Contact
Time with no contact
More information: Occupation, housing, cultural level, etc.

2.3. FAMILY HISTORY RECORDS

Type of relationship with family members:
Occupation:
Cultural and educational level:
Religion:
Components:
Extended family:





2.4. CURRENT SOCIO-FAMILY SITUATION

Knowledge of the situation of the minor:
Occupation:
Contact:
Kind of support to the minor's migrant situation:

2.5. FAMILY DINAMICS

Type of relationship (authority, respect, etc.)
Clear roles:
Type of affection among members:
Communication:

2.6. DESIRE FOR FAMILY CONTACT

Type of contact desired by the minor:
Type of contact desired by the family member:
Should contact be encouraged or discouraged between the minor and the relative:
Should a working relationship be established between the centre/practitioner and the family member:
Special considerations:

2.7. CONTACT PLAN

Means for implementing contact (phone, skype, email, in person) for the minor :
Desired frequency of contact:
Resources required:
Special considerations:
Observations:
Recommended changes:

Means for establishing a working relationship with the centre/practitioner (phone, skype, email, in person):
Desired frequency of contact:
Resources required:
Special considerations:





3. ADAPTATION TO THE CENTRE

3.1. ADAPTATION TO THE CENTRE

Respect for rules
Relationship with adults
Relationship with other minors
Mood
Involvement in tasks and activities
Autonomy when carrying out activities
Warnings
Responsibility
Interests
Personal hygiene routines

3.2. BASIC AND HEALTH HABITS.

Personal hygiene routines
Cleaning of personal and common areas
Eating routines
Sport activities participation
Drug abuse

4. PERSONAL AREA

4.1. PSYCHOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

Psychological examination and assessment of the different skills and capabilities will be done through the direct observation and interviews with the minor. Also, bearing in mind the lack of (insert your country language) language knowledge, projective techniques will be used as they do not require verbal behaviour. The below aspects will be assessed:

Basic psychological processes: attention, perception, concentration and memory
Superior psychological processes: reasoning/abstract thinking, information processing, assimilation and awareness of their situation
Personality
Anxiety, stress
Emotional intelligence, empathy
Possible cognitive disorders





4.2. PSYCHOSOCIAL COMPETENCE

Communication
Assertiveness
Locus of control
Problems-solving skills
Coping strategies
Frustration tolerance level
Self-concept and self-esteem
Other

4.3. EXPERIENCING THE SITUATION

Future prospects
Actual knowledge of the situation in [COUNTRY]

4.4. FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Psycho-emotional reactions to discussing family
Psycho-emotional reactions when in contact with family

5. EDUCATION AND TRAINING AREA

5.1. SCHOOL SITUATION

Knowledge of [COUNTRY LANGUAGE].
General educational level
Information in relation to the school
Behaviour and attitude
Out-of-school resources (leisure, sport, training)
Interests and expectations
Potential for family support or involvement in assuring future schooling

5.2. TRAINING SITUATION

Employment training
Type
Speciality
Training centre
Starting date - finishing date
Potential for family support or involvement in future training opportunities/available resources





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5.3. EMPLOYMENT SITUATION

Work experience
Position and place of work
Company
Telephone
Start date – end date
Reason for leaving
Potential for family support or involvement in future training employment/available resources





Annex 2b - "Family Report and Involvement Plan"³

The information below, confidential and only be used as part of the minor's case file, comes from the following sources: documents analysis, interviews, telephone calls, Police technical reports, Social Services, contact with other centres, etc.

This report is composed by three parts related to the **minor's family** and the assessment of the possible involvement inside his/her plan.

- 1. Background information** and minors' social situation before the arrival.
- 2. Socio-family area** that examines: family and relatives' details, situation and dynamics and above all contact plan (minor and practitioners).
- 3. Potential family involvement** analyzing the possible connections and the contribution for the minor's future.

FAMILY REPORT AND INVOLVEMENT PLAN⁴

DATE STARTED:
LAST UPDATED:

³ Annex 3 and Annex 4 can be used to help collect information.

⁴ *This report is property of Fundacion Diagrama Intervencion Psicosocial and it is a tool used in its educational centres.*





1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Name:
Surname:
Date of birth:
Age:
Passport no/ID:
Telephone:
Origin country:
Family address in [COUNTRY]:
Family address in the country of origin:
Contact telephone number:
Legal situation:
Date of arrival in [COUNTRY]:
Date of arrival in the centre:
Centre:
Address:

Social context in which he/she was living
Socio-economic level
Social network

2. SOCIO-FAMILY AREA

2.1. FAMILY DETAILS

Name	Blood kinship (or other significant relationship)	Age	Civil status	Current occupation	Address

2.2. RELATIVES IN [COUNTRY]/EUROPE

Number of people
Blood kinship
Relationship
Contact
Time with no contact
More information: Occupation, housing, cultural level, etc.





2.3. FAMILY HISTORY RECORDS

Type of relationship with family members:
Occupation:
Cultural and educational level:
Religion:
Components:
Extended family:

2.4. CURRENT SOCIO-FAMILY SITUATION.

Knowledge of the situation of the minor:
Occupation:
Contact:
Kind of support to the minor's migrant situation:

2.5. FAMILY DINAMICS.

Type of relationship (authority, respect, etc.)
Clear roles:
Type of affection among members:
Communication:

2.6. DESIRE FOR FAMILY CONTACT

Type of contact desired by the minor:
Type of contact desired by the family member:
Should contact be encouraged or discouraged between the minor and the relative:
Should a working relationship be established between the centre/practitioner and the family member:
Special considerations:

2.7. CONTACT PLAN

Means for implementing contact (phone, skype, email, in person) for the minor :
Desired frequency of contact:
Resources required:
Special considerations:
Observations:
Recommended changes:

Means for establishing a working relationship with the centre/practitioner (phone, skype, email, in person):
Desired frequency of contact:
Resources required:
Special considerations:





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3. POTENTIAL FAMILY INVOLVEMENT

3.1 FAMILY CONNECTIONS

Psycho-emotional reactions to discussing family

Psycho-emotional reactions when in contact with family

3.2 POTENTIAL FAMILY CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE MINOR'S FUTURE

Potential for family support or involvement in assuring future schooling

Potential for family support or involvement in future training opportunities/available resources

Potential for family support or involvement in future training employment/available resources





ANNEX 3 – IDENTIFYING AND ASSESSING FAMILY⁵

EXERCISE: Mapping Geographical and Emotional Distance

Specific exercises can be employed to map both the geographical and emotional distance between the minor and his/her “family” members as well as to help identify the relationships where practitioners should intervene.

The first step in this process involves the mapping of geographical distance between the minor and each family member and other emotionally significant individuals. This entails before asking the minor for a list of *all* their family members or others who are of significance to him/her. The minor is then asked to place each individual on a piece of paper where the minor indicates where each of the listed family members (or significant individuals) is geographically located in relation to the minor along with a specification of the city and country. [Alternatively the practitioner may take small pieces of paper and then ask the minor to write each family members’ name on a separate piece and then place them on the table with the minor’s name in the centre.]

The exercise has to be repeated for emotional distance and can be repeated as time passes in order to assess change.

Taking these two maps together should make it possible to better understand the physical and emotional space that separates the minor from a parent, sibling, or other significant individual.

Upon completion of these “current situation” maps, the practitioner should ask the minor to specify where he/she would like each of the individuals to be located both in terms of geographical space and emotional space.

Taken together, these exercises provide information that can be useful in determining how to best work with the minor and his/her family by providing the practitioner with a basis for understanding the current situation and an ideal future situation – both from the minor’s point of view.

⁵ This exercise can be used to support the compilation of the Case Study Report and Family Involvement Plan (Annex 2).





The mapping exercises represent the starting point for exploring the nature of existing relationships including, but not limited to, the identification of:

- sources of stable support;
- cases of abuse, neglect or violence;
- emotionally significant but troubled relationships (e.g., relationships that are a source of stress for the minor);
- individuals that are harmful to the minor and where distance should be maintained and/or increased;
- individuals with which the minor would like to have more contact and/or improve the relationship; and
- individuals that the practitioner sees as instrumental in working with the minor.

This identification is intended to support the development of effective and targeted actions that promote the development of a plan that

- (1) effectively addresses the minor's current emotional and basic needs, and
- (2) helps ensure future success and the minor's capacity to undertake autonomous choices towards a positive life trajectory upon becoming an adult.





ANNEX 4 - FAMILY FOCUS QUESTIONS

The following questions are intended to guide the practitioner in completing the *Case Study Report and Family Involvement Plan* (Annex 2).

These questions are not intended to be asked once on a checklist basis, but should be repeated on an ongoing basis in order to ensure that the present and future focus is up to date and represents the current situation

GENERAL

- Where do the minor's relatives live? Do any reside in [Your country] or another EU country?
- What kind of relationship does the minor have with each individual?
- Which of the family members does the minor want to have contact with?
- What kind of relationship do you/the organization have with individual family members?
- What resources do these individuals offer in relation to the minor?

PRESENT FOCUS: ESTABLISHING CONTACT

- Which family members does the minor want to have contact with now?
- Are there any family members that the minor would like to have contact with, but that you feel are detrimental the minor's well-being? Why? How can this be addressed?
- Can a go-between be used to establish contact in case of difficulty?
- Which family members can be/are involved in supporting the minor's immediate needs?
- What is necessary in order to assure their involvement?
- How can barriers or obstacles to contact between the minor and his or her family members be overcome?
- To what extent is direct contact between the practitioner/organization and the family or family member desirable and possible?
- What can be done to overcome communication difficulties between the practitioner/service provider and the family?

FUTURE FOCUS

- Which individuals would the minor like to establish a stronger relationship with?
- Is there anyone that the minor would like to live with? Is this individual willing to host the minor? What needs to be done to assure that this happens?
- What plan best fits the minor's long-term success? Which educational and work opportunities are available?
- Which family members can support the minor in achieving these goals?





ANNEX 5 – CREATING A FAMILY PROFILE

General Family Assessment (e.g., To what extent does the family represent a resource or offer support? To what extent does it seem to pose problems or difficulties for the minor? Do any family members represent a dangerous element? Describe.)
Key family members to be involved or avoided. Why?
Resources that the family can contribute to the minor’s present and future (psycho-social well-being, living situation, educational and employment, long-term prospects)
Should contact between the minor and individual family members be encouraged? Why? How?
Should the practitioner/centre establish direct contact with individual family members? Why? How?
Linguistic/communication barriers and potential





ANNEX 6 – GROUP PROCESSES FOR PRACTITIONERS

Group Exercise for Practitioners

The intention of this exercise is not to identify an answer or solution but to explore existing ideas and perceptions.

Select one of the themes from the “Questions List” presented above and discuss the them setting with colleagues.

Participants should feel free to add new themes or questions that they feel are appropriate or interesting.

Groups should ideally have 6-10 participants in order to facilitate discussion while ensuring that there is room for everyone to speak.

Participants should sit in a circle without a table or object in the middle.

The group should be facilitated/coordinated by an identified coordinator who presents the theme and the connected questions facilitating the discussion among the participants.

Groups may be organized on an ad hoc or regular basis to address each of the themes.

The questions below coming from inputs, suggestions, notes of the Manual (see in particular parts 2 and 3 related both general consideration in working with UAMs and more specifically with their families).





"Themes and Questions List"

Reconceptualizing the role of family and family tracing

- ❖ What are the laws in your country with regards to family tracing? What impact do they have on your work?
- ❖ What is your view on sending UAMs back to their families in the country of origin? When might it be beneficial to do so? When might it not be in the best interests of the child?
- ❖ What alternatives are there to sending the minor back to the country of origin?
- ❖ What are your expectations in regards to your capacity to welcome the minor within your social, cultural and economic context?
- ❖ How do you think family connections can be used to address the minor's emotional, psychological and social needs?

What do we mean by family?

- ❖ What does family mean to you? What impact do you think that your cultural background has on this meaning?
- ❖ Does your idea of family seem to differ from that of the UAMs that you work with? What role does culture play in determining this difference?
- ❖ Do you think that other people can replace or fill in for parents or other family members? Why or why not?

What do we mean by family contact?

- ❖ What do you currently do to promote family contact between the minor and his or her family?
- ❖ Are there times when you try to discourage contact between the minor and a given family member? If yes, why?
- ❖ What do you do as a practitioner to engage with and involve the minor's family?





Work on the basis of trust, confidentiality and honesty

- ❖ What do you do to support the development of trust with the minor? Do you feel that this is effective and adequate?
- ❖ What measures do you take to ensure confidentiality? Do you feel that this is adequate?
- ❖ Are the minors aware of what will happen with the information they share?
- ❖ Have you found yourself in conflict when carrying out your professional mandate and complying with other national or international requirements or law? If yes, what have you done to address this conflict?

Assess the Minor as an Individual

- ❖ Do you currently use checklists or needs assessment instruments?
- ❖ What function do they serve in your work? How useful are they?
- ❖ What do you do with the information collected?
- ❖ Do you go back to the minor to see if things have changed?

Understanding the Minor's Perspective

- ❖ When can you consider a minor capable of autonomous choices? Is this related only to the age or connected to other conditions?
- ❖ What do you think of cultures in which minors contribute significantly to the family income?
- ❖ Which are the weight and the importance given by the minor to the work?
- ❖ How do you view minors who live independently and support themselves?
- ❖ What do you define as abuse or traumatic? Why?
- ❖ What do the minors that you have worked with seem to define as abusive or traumatic? Does this differ from your own view?
- ❖ How do you view minors who are responsible for supporting other family members?
- ❖ Have you ever done something that you thought was in the best interests of the child that proved to be detrimental or damaging? How could things have been done differently?





Deconstructing Reality and Myth

- ❖ What myths are associated with your country?
- ❖ What expectations do UAMs who enter your country tend to have?
- ❖ What expectations do their families tend to have?
- ❖ What ideas do UAMs have of their final (intended) destination country?
- ❖ What are your views of the minor's possibilities in your country?
- ❖ What are your views of the situation in the minor's dream country?
- ❖ What impact do you think your views have on the work that you do with the minor?

Being Realistic About What You Can Do and What the Context Has to Offer

- ❖ Do UAMs generally see your country as a transit country, destination country or dream country?
- ❖ What do you see as being the minor's most immediate needs?
- ❖ Is there space for long-term project development?
- ❖ What role do you see for family involvement and contact in meeting the minor's immediate needs?
- ❖ What role do you see for family involvement and contact in meeting the minor's long-term needs? How does this fit within the treatment of UAMs in your country?
- ❖ What do you think the social and economic context has to offer to UAMs?

Be Realistic About the Role of Return and/or Reunification

- ❖ Have you ever had a case in which you feel that a minor was returned or reunified with his or her family when he or she should not have been so?
- ❖ Why was this? What could/should have been done differently?
- ❖ When do you think return or reunification might not be appropriate?
- ❖ When do you think return or reunification is appropriate?





Balancing the Legal Case and the Human Case

- ❖ How relevant is the legal case in your work with UAMs?
- ❖ How relevant is the human case in your work with UAMs?
- ❖ What do you think that you could do to better balance both?

Taking up the Past: Speaking About and Identifying Family

- ❖ How do you feel about addressing the issue of family with the minor?
- ❖ When and how do you think it is appropriate to do so?
- ❖ How do minor's usually respond when you take up the issue?
- ❖ What measures are taken to assure the minor's psychological and emotional well-being when speaking about family?
- ❖ Do you think that more should be done to enhance family contact and involvement?

