



Needs Tackling and Networks for Unaccompanied Children integration

Newsletter N° 1

The Unaccompanied Children in Europe – Issue of the project

Unaccompanied children or minors (UAMs), also known as Separated children, are defined as non EU nationals or stateless persons below the age of eighteen:

- who arrive in the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them (whether by law or custom) for as long as they are not effectively taken into the care of such a person;
- or, who are left unaccompanied after they have entered the territory of the Member States.

Therefore, the unaccompanied children are high risk targets for social exclusion and have specific needs which must be regularly reviewed (special attention must be also paid to those requiring special care, protection or treatment for their physical or mental health).

Statistics concerning unaccompanied children in the EU territory are uncertain, however since the nineties, the number of UAMs has consistently

increased and today is a phenomenon affecting all EU member states.

Regardless of the reasons for their arrival in the EU territory – be it fleeing from ¹their country in fear; being victims of trafficking and exploitation; looking for decent living conditions or crossing the border in order to join relatives – their status as children requires special attention.

However, the support and hospitality offered to them varies considerably from one state to another, and research has shown that a number of EU Member States do not fully implement the fundamental rights of the child when dealing with the situation of unaccompanied, migrant and asylum-seeking children.

The United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child¹ states that "the enjoyment of rights stipulated in the Convention is not limited to children who are citizens of a State party and must therefore, if not explicitly stated otherwise in the Convention, also be available to all children - including asylum seeking, refugee and migrant children- irrespective of their nationality, immigration status or statelessness".

¹ <http://www.ohchr.org/EN/ProfessionalInterest/Pages/CRC.aspx>



The European Commission Action Plan for unaccompanied minors (2010-2014)² considers that the contents of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child should be placed “at the heart of any action concerning unaccompanied minors”¹⁶ and advocates a common EU approach on this issue based on the respect of the rights of the child, particularly the principle of the best interests of the child, “ which must be the primary Consideration in all actions related to children taken by public authorities”.

Generally, the current EU standards do not provide the guarantees which should benefit these children in order to protect them.

“The primary consequence ensuing from the above-described practice is that a significant percentage of unaccompanied children living in the European Union are lacking protection, whether they never enter, or abandon the institutional reception facilities after a short or longer stay”³.

The principal aim of the Net for U project is to define an effective, multidimensional intervention programme aimed at improving the integration of unaccompanied foreign children, ensuring that their needs and interests are met.

What is Net for U?

“Net for U - Needs Tackling and Networks for Unaccompanied Children integration” is a European project involving 7 partners and is coordinated by

² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=COM:2010:0213:FIN:EN:PDF>

³ “Unaccompanied children lacking protection in Europe”, Pucafreu Project Final Comparative Report, Pucafreu, Migrinter, CNRS, 2013

the Istituto Don Calabria in Italy, with the support of the European Commission, DG Home Affairs.



The main goal of the project is to define an effective, multidimensional intervention programme aimed at improving the integration of unaccompanied foreign children, as well as ensuring that their needs and interests are met. One of the intended outcomes of the project is to strengthen both the individual social networks of unaccompanied children, and create new forms of cooperation, within and between services and stakeholders.

Unaccompanied Children are high risk targets for social exclusion and have specific needs which must be regularly reviewed (special attention must be also paid to those minors requiring special care, protection or treatment for their physical or mental health).

For these main reasons the primary purposes of the project are:

a.) to elaborate a knowledge-based intervention model to help improve the practices of both ongoing special needs assessment (in order to elaborate a coherent life-project for each child) and common family tracing procedures (in order to map familiar relationships – unless this goes against the child’s best interest – as possible emotional and



physical care resources to sustain positive paths and wellbeing and/or to promote family reunification);

b.) to provide children with appropriate opportunities for training and education; social and leisure activities; and participation in cultural life where they live and thereby increasing opportunities for interaction with their peers and adults of the host society, and those belonging to the same national or cultural group, in order to provide occasions for the children to live their own culture, ensuring the respect of diversity together with the promotion of the integration in the collective life;

c) to build a permanent transnational cooperation amongst professionals, stakeholders, social workers and all other figures who work with unaccompanied children, to define international measures, to share positive practices concerning integration through individualised care plans so that they may respond appropriately to their individual needs.

The key outputs of NET FOR U project are:

- the **Toolkit** for a common approach to special needs assessment and family tracing;
- the **Intervention Manual** to build individualised programmes targeted at children (covering different areas: education, labour, family relationships, social and leisure);
- the **Guidelines document** for the establishment of a permanent network (NET FORUM) for a cooperative strategy between organisations and stakeholders at a local, national and international level to address the specific



and common challenges.

BENEFICIARIES AND CONNECTED ACTIONS

Direct beneficiaries - Young TCN (Third Country Nationals) unaccompanied children (about 40 per country, 240 in total) separated from both parents or from their 'primary' legal or the customary caregiver staying in the country under the supervision of the host state without undergoing asylum procedures, and that are in situations of vulnerability and exposed to multiple risks. The beneficiaries will be involved through the assessment of their needs and family tracing pilot experimentation, the co-definition of their life-project, participation in language courses (2 per country), workshops (2 per country) and exchange events (2 per country) and evaluation of the support received. Specific attention will be paid to the aspects of vulnerability (physical and psychological) and to the cultural, ethnic, religious diversity of the individual. The experience of the partners who work daily with the individual will guarantee the required awareness of the best interest and the rights of the child. The intervention experimentation is aimed at creating favourable conditions for minors' educational, social and cultural participation and empowering their capacities.

Stakeholders - Principal service providers targeted to TCN unaccompanied children and TCN youngster, NGO's and associations working with the target, training professionals, social workers, psychologists, judicial authority, TCN migrants' associations will be involved several time in NET FOR U activities at national and transnational level.



According with the long term experience of the project partners and to the literature and guidelines on the topic elaborated by different international and European institutions, different professional profiles will be engaged in order to guarantee an integrated and multidisciplinary approach and to foster a rich mutual learning process. These persons will be involved at different stages, such as: interviews during the first months; cooperation for a co definition of Life-projects; conduction of training courses and workshops; participation to the meeting aimed at create “local networks” on the topic.

Other actors – Part of the NET FOR U activities are aimed at reaching a potential group of at least 5000 persons (via e-newsletter) and persons invited at the final conference (at least 100 persons). In addition contacts of each partner and their networks (at least 500 persons each) through the NET FORUM web platform. Thanks to these existing contacts and those that will be developed during the project implementation, the main results will also be diffused in the countries of origin of unaccompanied children. The transnational value of the guidelines and the aim of establishing a permanent cooperation between the principle EU host countries of the unaccompanied children and a collaborative relationship also with the countries of origin are strictly linked with the capacity of the partnership to be very proactive in constantly involving other stakeholders working in the field of immigration policies, minors protection, social inclusion.

Duration of the project– 18 months, starting on 03 September 2012.

Project partners



Istituto Don Calabria

(IT) Coordinator of the project
<http://www.csben.it/>



Europe Peace Youth (UK)

<http://www.europepeaceyouth.org>



Fundación Diagrama (ES)

<https://www.fundaciondiagrama.es>



Association Diagrama (FR)

<http://www.associationdiagrama.fr>



SYNERGIA-net

Synergia (IT)



Christian Association of Youth Villages (DE)

<http://www.cjd.de/zentrale/pages/index/p/2112>



The Smile of the Child (GR)

<http://www.hamogelo.gr/1.2/>



International Juvenile Justice Observatory (IJJO) (BE)

<http://www.oijj.org/en>



European Commission
 Directorate-General Home Affairs
 Directorate B: Immigration and Asylum
 UNIT B4: Financial Support – Immigration and Asylum

Partners Reports

France

The Unaccompanied Foreign Minors in France

1. - Definition - legal framework

Article 1 of the Council of the European Union resolution of 26 June 1997 defines unaccompanied minors as *"all third-country nationals below the age of eighteen who arrive on the territory of the Member States unaccompanied by an adult responsible for them whether by law or custom ... and minors who are nationals of third countries who are left unaccompanied after they have entered the territory of the Member States"*.

Germany

The appropriate service provision for unaccompanied minors (UAM) and the focus on the "best interest of the child" constitutes an ongoing challenge for policy makers, government and youth service agencies, communities and social workers. In Germany, the service delivery is further complicated by a **federal political system** which grants **discretion to the 16 "Bundesländer" (states)** with respect to the accommodation of UAM. Due to this administrative structure, there are **significant differences between individual states** in the provision of services to this target group.

Greece

According to the Greek legislation⁴ unaccompanied minor is a person below the age of 18 who arrives in the Greek territory unaccompanied by an adult

⁴ Presidential Decree 220/2007 Article 1 (f) (Transposing the Directive 2003/9/EC laying down minimum standards for the reception of asylum seekers) and Presidential Decree 114/2010 Article 2 (j) *on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status*

responsible for him/her whether by law or by custom applying in the country of origin, and for as long as he/she is not effectively taken into the care of such a person, or a minor who is left unaccompanied after he/she has entered Greece

Italy

For unaccompanied foreign minor, we intend the minor without Italian or other European Union countries citizenship that by failing to apply for asylum, find himself/herself on the Italian territory without assistance and representation from parents or other adult legally responsible for him/her in accordance with the Italian normative in force⁵.

Spain

The phenomenon of child migration begins in Spain in the mid-90s, and it has increased significantly in recent years. In the first stage, most of these minors were street children in their countries of origin, but this profile has evolved and currently a high percentage of them lived with their families before emigrating.

United Kingdom

In the UK there is strong belief and value system that certain categories of unaccompanied foreign minors need to be protected by the state, as they are perceived to be vulnerable, especially when there is no adult to take responsibility for them. Legislation outlines the responsibilities of state actors in the protection of minors who are in need. This report gives an overview of the current arrangements at a range of levels to address the situation of unaccompanied foreign minors who arrive in the UK. It also focuses on the process,

⁵ Council of Ministers Presidential Decree n.535/99". The Italian normative governing the issue of unaccompanied foreign minors is the "*Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero*" (D.LGS of 25th July 1998, n. 286 - artt. 19, 33).



procedure with the experiential factors around need assessments and family tracing for unaccompanied foreign minors

[Dialogue on International Migration and Development](#) in New York on 3-4 October, civil society and the UN are jointly hosting this online discussion on the positive impacts migration can have on young migrants and countries of origin and destination, and how this can be realized as part of the post-2015 development agenda.

http://www.worldwewant2015.org/migration?utm_source=iContact&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Inequalities:%20WorldWeWant2015&utm_content=Migration+invitation

Agenda

1. A new era of discussions on migration and development

For the second time in history, the General Assembly will convene a high-level event on 3-4 October, devoted to international migration and development at the United Nations. This meeting provides an opportunity for the international community to review progress since the first High-level Dialogue in 2006 and promote and advance the debate and cooperation in the field of migration and development.

<http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/newsletter/desanews/feature/2013/10/index.html#8499>



2. Youth Migration, Equity & Inequalities in the Post-2015 Development Agenda

How can migration be beneficial for adolescents, young people and countries of origin, destination and transit alike? Around the 2nd [High Level](#)



European Commission
Directorate-General Home Affairs
Directorate B: Immigration and Asylum
UNIT B4: Financial Support – Immigration and Asylum