



Needs Tackling and Networks for Unaccompanied Children integration



Conference:

“Improving the work with children on the move in the European Union” will be held on Thursday the 24th April 2014, from 9.30 am to 1 pm.

Venue:

***European Economic and Social Committee, Rue de Treves 74, Room 7701, 7th Floor, Brussels
Looking forward to seeing you there!***

Please contact Ms. Adélaïde Vanhove (avanhove@oijj.org) for any further information.

Newsletter N° 2

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The situation faced by unaccompanied foreign children who arrive in Europe is increasingly unsure, often having endured harsh journey conditions and in some instances, being placed in a detention facility as soon as they arrive in the host country. Many have a limited, if that, grasp of European languages and so find it difficult to express themselves. Many have fled persecution and conflict and are looking for a safe environment to live in, however often face obstacles throughout the integration process.

This second newsletter of the EU project Net for U, aims to share interviews with experts dealing with unaccompanied children which were conducted by the partners of the project in their countries; extracts of stories and experiences faced by unaccompanied children in Europe; and examples of good practices on family tracing and needs assessment implemented in the different partner’s countries.



The Net for U Project

“Net for U - Needs Tackling and Networks for Unaccompanied Children integration” (HOME/2011/EIFX/CA/1991) is a European project involving 7 partners and is coordinated by 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 minors (UAMs), 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 children 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 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.

[Click here to read more](#)

The toolkit and manual have been tested by our partners and will be available online shortly.

The Net For U project is a partnership between the following organisations:

Istituto Don Calabria (Italy), **Europeace Youth** (UK), **Fundación Diagrama** (Spain), **Association Diagrama** (France), **Christian Association of Youth Villages** (Germany), **Synergia** (Italy), **The Smile of the Child** (Greece), and the **International Juvenile Justice Observatory** (Belgium).

Interviews

Interviews carried out by some of our partner organisations give a fascinating insight into the experiences and lives of unaccompanied foreign children and those who work with them.

This edition features the following interviews

- [An interview with Marie Ortholary, a Family Tracing expert with the French Red Cross, from Foundation Diagrama France](#)

'How would you define the concept of 'Family Tracing'?

The mission to establish family ties (rétablissement des liens familiaux /RLF, in French) is a statutory mission of the French Red Cross. It's one of the oldest actions of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. Its origins lie in giving support to families who are no longer together due to armed conflict and other violent situations...'

- [An interview with Elena Buccoliero, a Juvenile Judge in the Emilia Romagna region of Italy, from Istituto Don Calabria.](#)

'Given your work experience, what do you think could be considered the most critical points in the reception system of unaccompanied foreign minors in Italy and in Emilia Romagna?'

There are numerous critical points, which have been very well identified I think by the Net for U project, just as the strengths have been identified.

Speaking about weaknesses and threats, one of these is the lack of a national fund, or at least regional, for the reception of unaccompanied foreign minors...'

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- [An interview with María Dolores Gabarrón Lax, a social worker at a foster home in Murcia, Spain, from Fundación Diagrama Spain](#)



'What are the expectations of children when they arrive in Spain? Is confrontation with reality or immigration deal worked with the minors in your centre? How?

The main reasons for the children's migration process are economic. In Spain minors have a clear economic motivation either to find a way to escape from the precarious life situation in their own countries, or to help their families with the money sent...'

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- **An interview with practitioners working with UAMS, in Hamburg, Germany from the Christian Association of Youth Villages**

Interviewer: Do you, and, if so, how do you address the subject of family?

Practitioner: it is not planned. Only if it comes up in a conversation with the UAM, if they are there and feel like talking about it, will we address the subject. We recently placed a world map in our office and we have noticed that the youth have started to talk about their flight trajectory to Germany. That is how it all starts...

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Case Studies

Case Studies from Spain, Greece and Germany allow us an insight into what it's like to work with unaccompanied children, from when they first arrive in Europe and once they've settled in to their new country.

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Our forum has now gone live on the Net For U website! Please [click here](#) to view, and contribute to, current topics being discussed!

1.) **Testimony from a volunteer social worker at Smile of the Child, Greece**

Greece is often a transit country for immigrants, refugees and their children, who are trying to go to a country usually in central or northern Europe for "a better life", but remain in Greece without "existing" anywhere. This is because if they obtain legal documents then they lose the opportunity to leave for their final destination...

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2.) **Elaboration of individual life-projects, Fundación Diagrama, Spain**

The group of unaccompanied migrant children has different characteristics and needs, being different in origin, culture, language and family situation, as well as individual aspects. Although generally there are two reasons for



which they have migrated. In some cases it was their own choice, but in many others, the families themselves make the decision, even by financing the costs of the trip, in the hope that the minor could help them financially in the future...

[Click here to read more](#)

3.) The story of three UAMs, in Hamburg, Germany from the Christian Association of Youth Villages.

Interviewer: *Could you tell me a little bit about yourselves?*

UAM1: My name is N. and I am from Afghanistan. I came to Germany one year ago and now go to school to learn the language. I am preparing for my 'Hauptschulabschluss'¹. In Afghanistan I went to school for 8 years. I learned English and Maths...'

[Click here to read more](#)

Good Practices

Short reports from Germany, Greece and Spain detail some of the proven techniques used when working with unaccompanied children and their results.

¹ Initial school degree after 9 years of school attendance in Germany

1.) CJD Hamburg + Eutin: Theatre project with Unaccompanied Foreign Minors addressing questions of identity, flight and growing up in a world of diversity (November 2012- November 2015)

'Gott und die Welt und ich' – 'God and the World and Me'

This is the title of a three year cooperative project between the CJD Hamburg + Eutin and the Thalia theatre, one of Hamburg's most renowned theatres. The project started in November 2012 and brings together unaccompanied young refugees and youths with a migration background on stage. The project aims to raise awareness of the diversity in the city and the hardship and the life paths of young refugees coming to Hamburg...

[Click here to read more](#)

2.) European Return Fund-Community Actions 2011-(Emergency Assistance): "Addressing the needs of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) in Greece"

The programme "Addressing the needs of unaccompanied minors (UAMs) in Greece" aims to assist and protect the rights of all the unaccompanied minors in Greece who wish to voluntarily return to their countries of origin.

[Click here to read more](#)





3.) Fostering project for unaccompanied migrant children with ages ranging from 13/14 to 18 years old, requiring specific protection, Fundación Diagrama, Spain

The protection centre Ankasó, is located at Calle 2 de Mayo 12, in the town of Alguazas (Murcia). This is a local resource framed in a small town with a rural character, but very close to the city of Murcia...

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Agenda

- **“Improving the work with Children on the move in the EU”
Net For U final conference**

Starting with a presentation of the results provided by the different partners of the European project “Net for U – Needs tackling and Networks Tracing for Unaccompanied Children integration”, this conference will focus on sharing experiences and promising practices to improve the work of professionals dealing with unaccompanied minors and children on the move, in regards to two key aspects: the needs assessment and family tracing.

What is the role of the Unaccompanied Foreign Minor’s family and what level of involvement is necessary in order to support the child during their

transition to adulthood? How can we identify, support and meet the child’s needs, taking into consideration the complexity of the phenomena and the variation in challenges faced by different EU countries?

How can we foster a cooperative strategy between organisations and stakeholders working at the local, national and international level? These will be the main issues around which participants will discuss and share their experiences

The conference will feature roundtable discussions on ‘Family Tracing and assessment tools under the Dublin Regulation” and “Improving the coordination and cooperation between EU and non-EU actors for a better protection and integration of children on the move in the EU” and will feature a variety of speakers and participants.

To see the Agenda of the Conference, please follow the link: <http://www.oiji.org/en/netforu-conference>

Venue:

European Economic and Social Committee, Rue de Treves 74, Room 7701, 7th Floor, Brussels

If you require any further information regarding the event please contact Ms. Adelaide Vanhove: avanhove@oiji.org

We look forward to seeing you in Brussels for what promises to be an informative and engaging event!

For other events related to Net For U, please visit the [Agenda section](#) of our website.



