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MIGRANT CHILDREN'S TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Thursday, 24 November 2022

Madrid, Spain

REPORT

This report is funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Council of Europe.¹

On 24 November 2022, Cepaim-Convive Foundation (Cepaim Foundation) organised a Transnational Workshop (the Workshop) on “*Migrant Children's Transition to Adulthood*”, in Madrid, Spain. The Workshop was organised in the framework of the multilateral project “Building Futures, Sharing Good Practices: Migrant Children's Transition to Adulthood – UACFutures”, co-funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Council of Europe.

The Workshop brought together over 45 participants from Germany, Greece, Malta, Netherlands, and Spain working with migrant children and youth, as well as young migrants to discuss the issue of transition to adulthood, take stock of existing challenges and identify areas where improvements can be made.

¹ The content of this report represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission and the Council of Europe do not accept any responsibility for the use that may be made of the information it contains.

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The Workshop was opened by Ms Dolores Navarro, Director General of Integration, Community of Madrid, Mr Ángel Carrasco, Regional Director of the Community of Madrid, Cepaim Foundation and Dr Gelly Aroni, Head of the Unit for Integration and Support of UAMs, Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors, Ministry of Migration and Asylum in Greece.

Mr Ángel Carrasco welcomed the participants and provided an overview of the Cepaim Foundation and its work. In this context, Mr Carrasco presented a project aiming at promoting the autonomy of young care leavers in Madrid. By providing an overview of the evolution of this project, Mr Carrasco underlined the work carried out including the increase in the number of places in the shelters.

Dr Gelly Aroni informed about the number of unaccompanied migrant children in Greece and the work of the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors. Dr Aroni reiterated, *inter alia*, the importance of a supportive framework for young migrants after the age of 18.

Ms Dolores Navaro presented the number of minors under the care of the Community of Madrid (CAM). In this context, Ms Navaro highlighted the importance of training opportunities and the wide range of courses provided. She specifically noted the agreements-contracts between the Cepaim Foundation and the CAM, thanking them for the work they have carried out so far and expressing the hope for continued collaboration on empowerment projects in the future.



Following the opening remarks, the participants had the opportunity to watch the video "Yesterday I dreamt you" developed by Cepaim Foundation in the framework of the UACFutures project. Mr Daniel Lavella, Coordinator of Institutional Campaigns and

Audiovisual Content, Cepaim Foundation, explained the rationale and aim of the video. Following the presentation, the participants discussed about the importance of:

- enhancing the capacities of professionals working with young people and migrant children.
- supporting and accompanying young people to fulfil their dreams, as they do not have their family nearby.
- an individualised approach.
- giving young people a voice and empowering them.

Ms Anne Kayser, Advisor from the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees, Council of Europe, presented the [Recommendation CM/Rec\(2019\)4 of the Committee of Ministers to member States on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood](#) adopted in 2019. The recommendation was developed in the framework of the Council of Europe *Action Plan on Protecting Refugee and Migrant Children in Europe (2017-2019)* and the Youth for Democracy programme. After delineating some of the challenges that young migrants face, Ms Kayser provided an overview of the scope, purpose and guiding principles contained in the recommendation. She underlined that the recommendation provides, *inter alia*, guidance related to:

- An enabling legal framework
- Protection from discrimination
- Access to social services, accommodation and welfare benefits
- Access to education, vocational training and apprenticeship
- Access to free and comprehensive health care, including psychological support
- Access to timely, clear and transparent information and free legal advice
- The right to family reunification
- Access to employment

Finally, Ms Kayser informed that the current Council of Europe *Action Plan on protecting vulnerable people in the context of migration and asylum in Europe (2021-2025)* aims to, among others, promote the practical implementation of the recommendation on supporting young refugees in transition to adulthood.

Next, the participants learnt about the participatory "Aragonese Strategy for children and adolescents who migrate alone". The Strategy was developed within the framework of the programme "17 PLUS" with the aim of supporting children and young migrants without parental care. Through the successful collaboration between the Aragon Institute of Social Services and the University of Zaragoza, young people have a place to share their views and participate in the community. Overall, the Strategy focuses on: 1) providing children and adolescents with the opportunity to innovate 2) improving the situation of young migrants,

and 3) setting goals on how to improve the future participation of youth. Other key aspects and aims of the strategy are:

- People concerned take part in the reception and in the decision-making process.
- People who have experienced similar situations and difficulties, support young people by acting as a role model and a point of reference including on mental health issues.
- Children and youth themselves are involved in the evaluation of the Strategy.
- Young people are informed about their rights and receive support and legal assistance from the moment of their arrival in Spain.
- Professionals have access to specific and concrete training programmes in relevant areas.
- Young people's initiatives are supported, instead of trying to direct them.
- The right to freedom of religion and belief of youth is respected.
- The focus is on a community approach with a view to making society more inclusive. Giving, therefore, the opportunity to the youngsters to relate to and do activities with people other than their own peers.



The afternoon session was dedicated to “Access to basic rights and legal support: Promising practices”. The roundtable was moderated by Mr Adam Mohamed Ariche, International Relations Department, Fundación Cepaim. During this roundtable, the participants had the opportunity to learn about the context and promising practices from Germany and Malta. The speakers emphasised the importance of mentoring for the development of and access to rights for young people.

Ms Remenda Grech, Director, Foundation for Social Welfare Services and Ms Loraine Buhagiar, Unit Leader, Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS) from Malta



mentioned that the words "Children's Rights" have been included in the name of the relevant ministry, highlighting the importance of the topic. They further explained the legal and practical framework for the protection of unaccompanied children in Malta. In this context, Ms Grech and Ms Buhagiar informed that unaccompanied children are assigned a social worker who, among others,

assesses the possibility of family reunification. To this end, the importance of networking with other NGOs was also underlined. Upon turning 18, young refugees are provided with accommodation for one more year to support their transition to adult life.

Ms Alina Kierek, Project Coordinator and Mr Mustafa Hamdosch from Brückensteine Careleaver in Germany explained that the German system of guardianship and protection of minors does not differentiate between migrant and national children. They noted that, upon turning 18, young migrants have access to an out of care support programme which, among others, aims to promote empowerment and autonomy. To raise awareness about the situation of careleavers, Brückensteine Careleaver carried out a media campaign entitled “More than careleavers”.

The last session focused on “Access to housing: promising practices and working table” and was moderated by Ms Fay Koutzoukou from SolidarityNow in Greece.

Ms Theodora Kristofori, Project Manager from the Council of Europe provided an overview of the Council of Europe standards on the protection of children in the context of migration. Specific reference was, *inter alia*, made to the following principles:

- The best interests of the child should be a primary consideration in all decisions and actions involving children.
- The extreme vulnerability of the child takes precedence over his or her immigration status.
- The positive obligation to provide special protection and care to children and ensure that reception conditions are adapted to the child's age.

In light of work carried out in the framework of the UACFutures project, Ms Kristofori provided also an overview of possible accommodation options for unaccompanied children transitioning to adulthood and relevant good practices from different Council of Europe member States.

Then, Ms Maite Luque, Director of Innovation, Housing First for Youth, presented the organisation HOGAR SI (housing at the heart of the intervention) and the work they carry out with young people who have just reached the age of majority with a focus on the support provided to prevent homelessness.

Ms Luque explained that key aspects of their intervention include:

- The participants can choose the type of housing that best suits them (shared or individual).
- Understanding the transitional phase of turning 18 years old.
- Supporting young people in dealing with trauma.
- The importance of the evaluation of the programme to demonstrate with objective data its effectiveness.

Ms Verónica Mora, Project Coordinator from the Housing Solidarity Network of Cepaim Foundation, presented the Housing Solidarity Network Project of the Cepaim Foundation. As part of the project, Cepaim Foundation provides vulnerable and at-risk families rented housing units based on income criteria. The project started with the transfer of 39 homes from Caja Murcia to the Cepaim Foundation. The housing is linked to an individualised plan and the specific needs of the participants.



Mr Santiago Aranda, Director of the Horuelo Association, emphasised the lack of protection beyond the age of 18 outside the care system. In this context, the difference in the situation and opportunities between

national youth and young migrants (family support, income, age of emancipation, access to the labour market, etc.) were also underlined. Difficulty in accessing housing is currently the main obstacle for the autonomy of young people participating in the programmes. Simultaneously, risks of discrimination related to access to housing in the housing market makes the situation even more difficult including for programmes that are carried out in rural areas.

Finally, Ms Lilja Grétarsdóttir, Head of the Cooperation Programmes Division from Council of Europe and Mr Jesús Fernández de Sevilla, Coordinator of Transition to Adulthood Programmes,

Cepaim Foundation, summarised the main conclusions and findings of the Workshop. They highlighted the numerous difficulties that migrant youth face in their transition to adulthood and underscored the importance of ensuring the participation of young people when exploring and developing solutions in the field. In this spirit, the Workshop was



concluded by young migrants currently living in Algeciras, Barcelona, Germany and Zaragoza, who shared their experiences, hopes, and suggestions for improvement with the participants.



Annex I: News items and visibility of the Transnational Workshop

To ensure the visibility of the Workshop, Cepaim Foundation published a news item announcing the Workshop. The news item can be accessed under the following link: <https://www.cepaim.org/madrid-building-futures-sharing-good-practices-migrant-childrens-transition-to-adulthood/>

Fundacion Cepaim also used social media to further publicise the event. The posts can be accessed through the following links:

- <https://twitter.com/FundacionCepaim/status/1594991680004001793>
- <https://twitter.com/FundacionCepaim/status/1595700354011828229>
- [https://www.facebook.com/fundacion.cepaim/posts/pfbid05nnoeCejBZ4xVq7nTdJzgVqjMn9QpVHLsMUDGMhziVpTCg41uww5xbGZTqgwR64pl?_cft_\[0\]=AZXfUI_6cFJtaM4PVp6Ahj-1vf_dzpWB-dDz8NnmKLLhIOM90mKhkuyVkuJ13669QFEX1xU2y-t1zgCbPTXf8lrNZlbV-5T11XDjYRfbLzPxivPJ1bQvcalo2mORvo0zaYdAstMIp3lyeI3-KDB-zSAtnNRStjNVFcp1NfLG68x7-N5rr4PncYXzFXdOYmMy6jWg3HoA2FiQz0j62U7nsjiP&_tn_=%2CO%2CP-R](https://www.facebook.com/fundacion.cepaim/posts/pfbid05nnoeCejBZ4xVq7nTdJzgVqjMn9QpVHLsMUDGMhziVpTCg41uww5xbGZTqgwR64pl?_cft_[0]=AZXfUI_6cFJtaM4PVp6Ahj-1vf_dzpWB-dDz8NnmKLLhIOM90mKhkuyVkuJ13669QFEX1xU2y-t1zgCbPTXf8lrNZlbV-5T11XDjYRfbLzPxivPJ1bQvcalo2mORvo0zaYdAstMIp3lyeI3-KDB-zSAtnNRStjNVFcp1NfLG68x7-N5rr4PncYXzFXdOYmMy6jWg3HoA2FiQz0j62U7nsjiP&_tn_=%2CO%2CP-R)

Further visibility was ensured through the project website and the social media post of the Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Migration and Refugees of the Council of Europe. They can be accessed under the following links:

- <https://www.coe.int/en/web/special-representative-secretary-general-migration-refugees/multilateral-project>
- https://twitter.com/CoESR_migration/status/1596390072525688832

Annex II: Concept Note and Agenda of the Transnational Workshop

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MIGRANT CHILDREN'S TRANSITION TO ADULTHOOD

TRANSNATIONAL WORKSHOP

Thursday, 24 November 2022

Madrid, Spain

Organised by Fundación Cepaim in the framework of the Project “Building Futures, Sharing Good Practices: Migrant Children's Transition to Adulthood - UACFutures”

This Transnational Workshop is funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund and the Council of Europe.²

BACKGROUND

According to the latest estimates, over 23.200 unaccompanied children sought asylum in the European Union in 2021. Most of these children were between 16 to 17 years old.³ Transition to adulthood is a crucial period for these youngsters who often face challenges in accessing support services including welfare, education, health care and psychosocial support, accommodation, and legal assistance. Notwithstanding the challenges that unaccompanied migrants and refugees face when they reach the age of 18, various promising practices have

² The content of this concept note represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission and the Council of Europe do not accept any responsibility for the use that may be made of the information it contains.

³ Eurostat, [Asylum 2021: asylum decisions and unaccompanied minors](#), 04/05/2022, last accessed on 2 November 2022.

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also been developed in many countries to support the transition of these youngsters to adult life.

In this context, the multilateral project “**Building Futures, Sharing Good Practices: Migrant Children’s Transition to Adulthood– UACFutures**” aims to facilitate the fruitful exchange of good practices with a view to fostering practical solutions and contributing to long-term improvements in the quality of support for unaccompanied children during their transition to adulthood. The Project addresses four key areas of particular importance for unaccompanied migrant children during the transition to adulthood: psychological impact and support; legal support and access to basic rights; access to education and the labour market; access to accommodation.

The Project is funded by the European Union’s Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) and the Council of Europe. It is coordinated by the Council of Europe and jointly implemented with the Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum of Greece, SolidarityNow (Greece), Stichting Nidos (Netherlands) and Fundación Cepaim (Spain).

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

In the framework of this Project, Fundación Cepaim, is organising a Transnational Workshop on 24 November 2022 on “*Migrant Children’s Transition to Adulthood*”. The aim of the Workshop is to raise awareness and improve the knowledge of relevant professionals in supporting unaccompanied children in their transition to adulthood, *inter alia*, by:

- Discussing the needs and realities of unaccompanied children transitioning to adulthood in Spain and across Europe.
- Fostering national and international exchanges of experiences, promising practices, and know-how in the field.
- Exchanging on approaches and strategies for successfully supporting the transition of unaccompanied migrant children to adulthood.
- Strengthening transnational and multiagency cooperation between EU member States.

The Transnational Workshop will seek to underline the importance of placing the rights of the child at the heart of every measure taken, including in supporting transition to adulthood, while exploring sustainable solutions and promising practices in the field.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Public authorities, institutions, international organisations, child protection agencies, social and legal professionals, civil society organisations, academia, and other relevant professionals involved in the protection of unaccompanied children and young refugee and migrants.

VENUE

Luz Vallekas, Calle Melquiades Biencinto, N° 7. Madrid, Spain.

PROGRAMME

Thursday, 24 November 2022	
08:40 – 09:00	Registration of Participants
09:00 – 09:30	<p>Welcome and Opening Remarks</p> <p>Ms Dolores Navarro, Director General of Inclusion. Community of Madrid</p> <p>Mr Ángel Carrasco, Madrid Community Regional Director, Fundación Cepaim-Convive</p> <p>Dr Gelly Aroni, Head of the Unit for Integration and Support of UAMs, Special Secretariat for the Protection of Unaccompanied Minors. Ministry of Migration and Asylum, Greece</p>
09:30 – 10:00	<p>Video Presentation: “Yesterday I Dreamt of You”</p> <p>Mr Daniel Lavella, Coordinator of Institutional Campaigns, Corporate Image and Audiovisual Content Department, Fundación Cepaim-Convive</p> <p>Discussion with the participants</p>
10:00 – 10:25	<p>Council of Europe’s Guidance on Supporting Refugee and Migrant Children in Transition to Adulthood</p> <p>Ms Anne Kayser, Adviser, Office of the Secretary General’s Special Representative on Migration and Refugees, Council of Europe</p>
10:25 – 10:45	Coffee Break
10:45 – 12:30	<p>The Participatory Strategy for Supporting Unaccompanied Migrant Children and Youth in Aragón: Promising Practices and Working Table</p> <p>Moderator: Ms Paloma Garrido, Deputy Director, Federation of Entities offering Assisted Projects and Apartments (FEPA)</p> <p>Mr Angel Longares, Aragon Institute of Social Services</p> <p>Mr Chabier Gimeno, Professor and social worker, University of Zaragoza</p> <p>Ms Begoña Heras, Department of Public Law, University of Zaragoza</p> <p>Ms Beatriz Serrano, Social Educator, Fundación Cepaim-Convive</p> <p>Mr Adil Chatbi, young participant</p> <p>Discussion</p>

12:30 – 14:00	Lunch Break
14:00 – 15:40	<p>Access to Basic Rights and Legal Support: Promising Practices and Working Table</p> <p><i>Moderator: Mr Adam Mohamed Ariche</i>, International Relations Department, Fundación Cepaim-Convive</p> <p>Ms Remenda Grech, Director, Foundation for Social Welfare Services, Malta</p> <p>Ms Loraine Buhagiar, Unit Leader, Agency for the Welfare of Asylum Seekers (AWAS), Malta</p> <p>Ms Alina Kierek, Project Coordinator, Brückensteine Careleaver, Germany</p> <p>Mr Mustafa Hamdosch, young participant, Careleaver Weltweit, Germany</p> <p>Discussion</p>
15:40 – 16:00	Coffee Break
16:00 – 17:30	<p>Access to Accommodation: Promising Practices and Working Table</p> <p><i>Moderator: Ms Fay Koutzoukou</i>, Solidarity Now, Greece</p> <p>Ms Maite Luque, Director of Innovation, Housing First for Youth, H4Y Futuro HOGAR SI, Spain</p> <p>Ms Veronica Mora, Project Coordinator, Housing Solidarity Network. Fundación Cepaim</p> <p>Ms Theodora Kristofori, Project Manager, Cooperation Programmes Division, DGI, Council of Europe</p> <p>Mr Santiago Aranda, Director Horuelo Association, Youth Reception Area</p> <p>Discussion</p>
17:30 – 17:45	<p>Ms Lilja Grétarsdóttir, Head of the Cooperation Programmes Division, DGI, Council of Europe</p> <p>Mr Jesús Fernández de Sevilla, Coordination of Transition to Adult Life Programmes, Area of Socio-educational Intervention with Children, Youth and Families, Fundación Cepaim-Convive</p>