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Working with refugee children and young people...



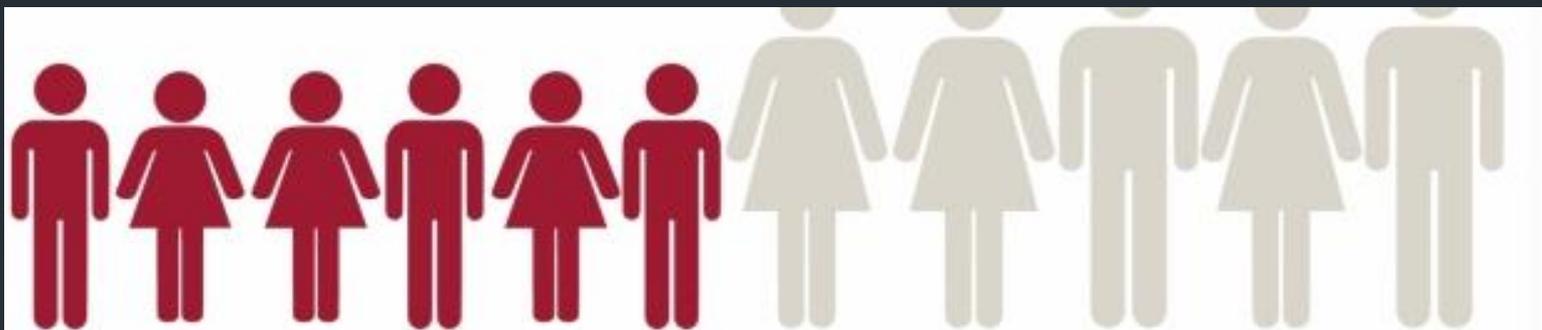
Aims and objectives

- This workshop aims at reflecting on the particular situation and needs of refugee children and young people, including unaccompanied minors, upon arrival in European countries.

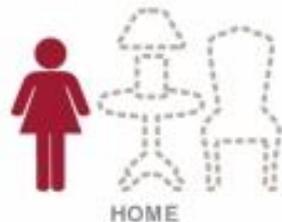
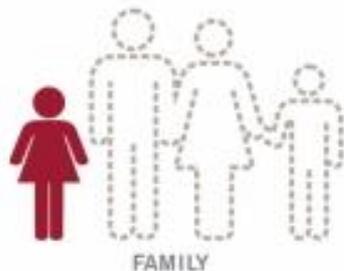
The objectives will be:

- To address the challenges faced by children and minor refugees when arriving (protection, trauma, isolation, categorisation, lack of possibilities to just be young people)
- To share some existing projects and practices developed by NGOs to work with/ accompany refugee children and young people
- To develop new ideas for accompanying young refugees in their integration in host countries

General context



More than 50% of Syrian refugees are children who've lost everything.





PSYCHOLOGICAL IMPACT

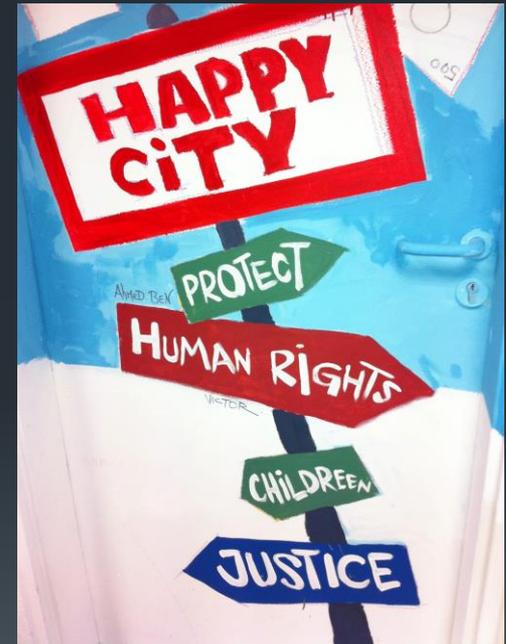
- Access to adequate psychological care
- Dealing with trauma of exile+ new trauma of insecurity in host country

« If they say yes, OK, I'll be able to continue living, but if they say no, it will be like a death penalty, a black whole, there'll be nothing after »

(Quoted by one of the interviewed unaccompanied minors)

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

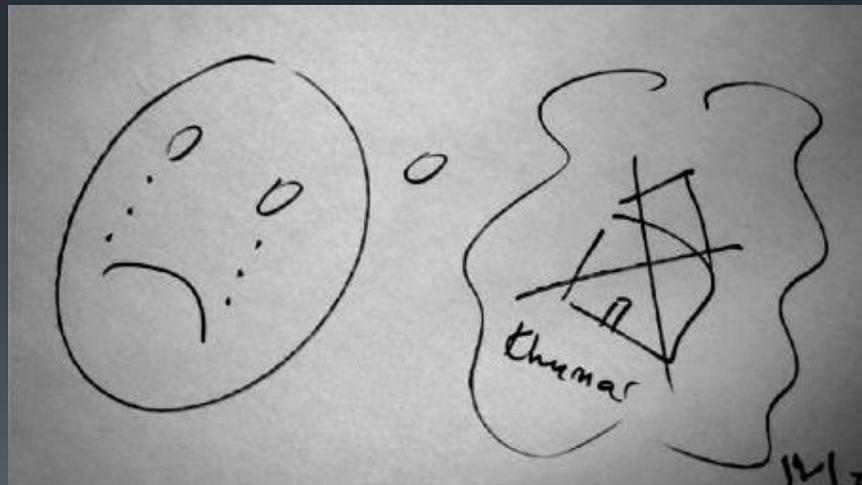
- Given the importance of family reunification in facilitating transition to adulthood and the resources it involves for the receiving State, the process should be completed even after reaching the age of majority. Family reunification procedures should be accelerated and simplified.



Home...

« I don't have a place that I call home » (Carlos)

- Home as a of security and protection, which can be either a physical place or an imaginary shelter for someone to find “refuge”





ACCESS TO EDUCATION

Access to education should be better supported, including, where necessary, after young unaccompanied and separated asylum seekers and beneficiaries of international protection have reached the age of majority, as it plays a critical role in their transition.

« When I was given access to education, they gave me three options: cooking carpentry or hotel business studies. I told them I wanted to study sewing. They checked if it was a profession with employment opportunities, and then they informed me I could start » (Manu, Paris)

++ France Terre D'asile in Créteil opened a facility which works exclusively on access to apprenticeship for UASASRC. 20 young people are living there with the support of child social welfare, with the aim of accessing apprenticeships.

ACCESS TO APPROPRIATE ACCOMODATION

- It needs to be ensured that refugee children and youth stay in accomodation with appropriate support and counseling.

« This is not a home, it's a camp. We would like to live in Budapest to share a flat (...). We have to share rooms with four other people; we have no autonomy at all. » (interviewed UASASC in Hungary)

« I'm afraid in my room by myself. It's noisy and I'm not used to sleeping alone. So we gather in one room at night to not be scared. » (UASC in France)





ACCESS TO EMPLOYMENT

- Appropriate counseling and support should be provided in order to facilitate access to the labour market of UASASRC
- ++ The reception centre for UASASRC in Fòt provides employment opportunities in gardening within its facilities. The project is funded by the European Refugee Fund and enables 7-8 young people to work there on a monthly basis. In this way, young people can focus on their studies and access easy and legal employment.



ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- Clear and transparent information about the procedures, the country, habits, culture, rules, traditions...

++ The association « Neuer Staat » in Austria was created by a group of young Afghan refugees.

« The association is responding to the lack of support provided by the State, and aims at giving back what they were able to get. We share experiences with newcomers, council them, accompany them in procedures and try to give them access to legal and administrative information. » (Moe, funding Member and young refugee)

ACCESS TO CHILDHOOD!

- Right to play
- Right to dance, flirt, go out, share on social media, practice sports and activities...
- RIGHT TO BE A CHILD



INTEGRATION



Integration is understood in a broad sense and covers also the integration of asylum-seekers in the host country during the asylum procedure, which may, in some Council of Europe Member States, last several years.

« I can't say I feel at home; home is where you have your family. That's the place you can call home. But when you don't have anyone, you can't sleep and you're thinking about them all the time, I don't know. It's not home for me. »

Laila, young refugee in transition, Sweden

INTEGRATION (2)

- ++ In Austria, the project « Connecting People » offers to bring together Austrian families who wish to support UASASRC. These families play the role of godfathers/ godmothers, help the UASC to discover the culture and traditions, take them out on week-ends, support them in education and administrative procedures. One strength of this project is that it is not limited in time, and thus ensures that UASASRC will retain some kind of support when they reach the age of majority.
- « *It helped me a lot, I really felt in a family and this gave me a feeling of security(...) When turning 18 you are usually left alone. And on top of all the new responsibilities you lose your contact person. I did not lose my host family, they continued supporting me after turning 18. »*

(Moe, young beneficiary of Connecting people, Austria)



Get together Stuttgart

Integration of young refugees into sports and youth clubs

- Tandem pack local youth- refugee youth : youth leadership training
- Peer-to-peer support (subscription in sports and activities)
- « getting to know the city »
- Intercultural training

Voices of Young Refugees in Europe (VYRE)

- Network created in 2008 by, with and for young refugees

Objectives:

- To create opportunities for sharing personal testimonies and experiences in order to enhance the capacity of young refugees/ exiles.
- . To ensure the active participation of young refugees/ exiles through empowerment in order to strengthen their voices and advocate for change on the political level.
- . To exchange information across national borders in order to identify issues of concern and recognise and promote good practices.



« It's important to involve refugees as actors in society when it comes to integration. They can help because they've been through the process before and can help others. They know what happens, they can base their exchange on their own experiences and have more expertise than any other actor »

(Moe, Austria)



What can you do?

- Education
- Leisure
- Creating safe place (« home »)
- Ensuring childhood
- Intercultural learning
- ...

Merci...

