



Promoting Foster Care for Unaccompanied Children in Europe

1. WELCOME

2. PROFUCE'S ACTIVITIES

3. UAM'S AND FOSTER CARE IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE PROJECT

4. UPCOMING EVENTS



1. WELCOME

Welcome to the second issue of "PROFUCE" newsletter!

This newsletter is an important information tool for dissemination and exchange of news and ideas around the European project "PROFUCE" and the promotion of foster care for Unaccompanied Minors in Europe.

The "PROFUCE" newsletter will be six-monthly. Each issue will propose updates on the project, news from partners, results of studies and initiatives, dates of events, training courses and much more.

Contact us for ideas, comments and questions.

IDI:
attivaiternazionali@istitutodeglinnocenti.it

NIDOS: m.groen2@nidos.nl and on content p.pol@nidos.nl

SOS VICENZA:
progetti@villaggiososvicenza.it (Silvia Spadaro)

METAdrasi:
vaitsis.metadrasi@gmail.com

National Association for Foster Care: info@napg.eu

Contact us for ideas, comments and questions...

IDI: attivaiternazionali@istitutodeglinnocenti.it

NIDOS: m.groen2@nidos.nl and on content p.pol@nidos.nl

SOS VICENZA: progetti@villaggiososvicenza.it (Silvia Spadaro)

METAdrasi: vaitsis.metadrasi@gmail.com

National Association for Foster Care: info@napg.eu

A Know-How Center for Alternative Care for Children at the New Bulgarian University: info@knowhowcentre.org

PARTNER



"This project was funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020)."

2. PROFUCE'S ACTIVITIES

TRAININGS OF TRAINERS AND ADAPTATION OF ALFACA MANUAL

The Training of Trainers in Bulgaria, Greece and Italy have been completed in 2018.

The trainings took place on:

Bulgaria-Sofia: April 11th-13th

Greece-Athens: May 2nd-4th.

Florence-Italy: May 28th-30th

Next to delivering the trainings, the Alfaca manual has been translated into Greek and Bulgarian. The Italian version was already available.

The Italian, Bulgarian and Greek partners are working on the Appendixes for the Italian, Bulgarian and Greek manuals. As the Manual itself cannot be adapted, Nidos have provided them with a template in order to make writing the Appendix somewhat easier.

All the programs of the training and Alfaca manual translated are available on PROFUCE website www.profuce.eu

ITALY

FLORENCE

The training of professionals (social workers, psychologist, etc.) on foster care for UAMs was held in Florence on 20th September and on 13th October 2018.

More than 30 professionals participated; the legislative framework on unaccompanied children and the Alfaca methodology on foster care for unaccompanied children was presented and discussed. Agenda of the days and the main presentation can be found at:

<https://profuce.eu/training/>

In November 2018 Municipality of Florence launched the Profuce awareness raising; the radio broadcasting campaign lasted 15 days and the radio station "Controradio" broadcasted 90 announcements plus 2 interviews. The campaign, specifically focused on the promotion of foster care for UAMs, was launched after the initiative known as "Month of the familiar foster care" (in Italian "mese dell'affido familiare"). The podcast of the interviews and announcements can be found on the webpage of Municipality of Florence (in Italian only)

http://politichesocioabitativa.comune.fi.it/affidamento_adozione/index.html

VICENZA

The training of professionals (social workers, psychologist, etc.) on foster care for UAMs was held in Vicenza on the 11th December. Social workers from Comune di Vicenza and professionals from the third sector participated.

The presentations were held by Comune di Vicenza and experts from Istituto degli Innocenti. Alfaca model was presented and discussed.

Agenda of the days and the main presentation can be found at: <https://profuce.eu/training/>

BULGARIA

A change in the regions in Bulgaria where the project activities are planned to be implemented was initiated by the Bulgarian partners in the very end of the year. A new refugee reception centre was established by decision of the government in the Sliven district, so the partnering organizations decided it would be of great use to include the specialists from the region in the project.

The National Foster Care Association is currently working with its members, the foster parents in Bulgaria, for recruiting families who are willing to engage with the rather sensitive issues of taking care of unaccompanied minors. The topic is new for the Bulgarian social system altogether and largely unpopular among the both the foster care providers and the foster parents themselves. A media campaign for awareness raising that targets the general public was launched in the beginning of 2019.

A team of trainers who took part in the national training delivered by the Dutch partners from NIDOS as part of the project is working on engaging the local stakeholders and organizing the trainings of social workers in the new regions. They are also working on the contents of the trainings in close cooperation with the Know-how Centre for Alternative Care for Children.

GREECE

In October 2018, a 2-day transnational partners' meeting was held in Athens for the discussion, evaluation and monitoring of project implementation. METAdrasi provided a presentation of their Foster Care Program and other Child Protection projects. Agenda of the days and the main presentation can be found at <https://profuce.eu/training/>

3. UAM'S AND FOSTER CARE IN THE COUNTRIES OF THE PROJECT

ITALY

The decree law on security recently converted into law by the Italian Parliament (Law n. 132/2018) may have dangerous effects on the future of unaccompanied foreign minors who will turn 18 in 2019 and who had applied for international protection before the entry into force of the decree law. That application, near the age of majority, is likely to be rejected, as it is already happening in some territories, and it would entail that the asylum seekers would be deprived of the hospitality and protection they deserve as they came from minors, and would compromise their path of integration in our country.



According to the monthly report on unaccompanied minors in Italy the number of unaccompanied minors was 10.787 at the end of 2018. Regarding the gender, 92,7 per cent of unaccompanied minors is male and the other 7,3 per cent is female. As for the origin, the majority of unaccompanied minors in Italy comes from Albania (14,4%), followed by Egypt (8,6%), Gambia (8,3%), Guinea, Eritrea and Ivory Coast. 85 per cent are aged between 16 and 17 years old and they are largely hosted by the Region of Sicily (38%). The unaccompanied minors who are unaccounted for deserve a special mention: they are minors that cannot be traced, that got away from reception facilities and it isn't possible to know their fate. The number of them was 5.229 at the end of 2018.

<http://www.lavoro.gov.it/temi-e-priorita/immigrazione/focus-on/minori-stranieri/Pagine/Dati-minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati.aspx>

The decree on the Fund for the struggle to the poverty and the social exclusion, which includes interventions for minors in care of the state who just turned 18, has gone into effect. The fund will guarantee 15 million of Euro for the three years (2018-2020), giving a financial assistance until the youngsters concerned have reached the age of 21. It is an important measure for the support of children leaving the out the care system but it has to be underlined that unaccompanied migrant children are not included in this measure. <https://www.minori.gov.it/it/node/6635>

THE NETHERLANDS

The influx in the Netherlands of unaccompanied children stay somewhat stable at approximately 20-25 minors per week. The nationalities of these children is shifting though. Children from Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan no longer form the majority of minors arriving in the Netherlands. Over 130 children from the so called Magreb Countries have been arriving from the beginning of October 2018. This poses a challenge for the reception centres as these children have been travelling for a long time through Europe and have survived in groups, often in a not acceptable manner, sometimes using criminal systems or being used by criminal organizations. Nidos is placing the youngest (11 to 15) and most vulnerable amongst these children in family care in order for them to have a chance to experience the positive effects of family life. Next to some small successes, unfortunately some of these placements have not been successful.

Due to a change in the law on foster care, minors now have the right to live in a family until they are 21. If youngsters choose to prolong their placement in the family after reaching the age of 18 years, both youngster and foster family continue to receive guidance from a social worker. Their foster families are supplied with a financial allowance. This new legislation was initiated to provide longer care for children in the regular foster care system but is not in all situations applicable on our youngsters. This depends on the actual status of their lawful residence. At this moment Nidos is developing policy and work processes in order to be able to apply the legislation in the appropriate manner.



BULGARIA

According to the official yearly statistics recently provided by the State Agency for Refugees less and less foreigners are seeking and granted protection in Bulgaria. In 2018, humanitarian and refugee status has been granted to 2536 person altogether. In comparison, this is the approximate number of people seeking asylum in the country just for the first two and a half months of 2014 during the height of the refugee crisis in Europe. In 2014 and 2015 the number of asylum applicants in the country exceeded 20,000 which is more than 10 times over the number of people that were entering the country seeking protection in the two consecutive years of 2017 and 2018 now.

About 34% of the people – or approx. 850 – that have entered the country as refugees are children. Less than 300 of them have been officially classified as unaccompanied minors just 28 of whom are under the age of 14. (<https://aref.government.bg/bg/node/238>)

Even though due to the dynamics of the political developments a tendency for instability in the migration flow has always been present on the Balkans, the State Agency for Refugees interprets the current drop in the number of refugees is a significant and important one. According to the authority, key policies have been introduced in terms of straightening the border and managing the migration process that are causing sustainable decrease in the number of refugees in Bulgaria.

GREECE

The significant novelty introduced in the new law 4538/2018 (“Measure on the Promotion of Foster Care and Adoption Institutions plus other provisions” 4538/2018) voted by the Hellenic Parliament on May 16th, was the inclusion of the concept of unaccompanied refugee minors as minors that are in need of family care.

A notable measure the new law stipulates is the incorporation of unaccompanied minors into the health insurance scheme/provider of their foster parents in order to be able to benefit from their healthcare services. As of now, unaccompanied minors had the right of access solely at the public hospitals which proved be very problematic in practice.

Another essential measure is the provision of parental leave for foster parents in order to meet the demands of the increasing needs of their roles.

During the second semester of 2018, METAdrasi in close collaboration with all the respective public services in regional and municipal level has managed to receive referrals not only for UASC in need of family care but also for approved candidate parents who wish to undertake the care of an unaccompanied minor.

It has to be highlighted, that during this period METAdrasi became one of the main civil society actors which in cooperation with the Perfectures’ social services of the region of Athens, receives directly referrals of minors of a very young age in order to prevent their placement to institutionalized care.





4. UPCOMING EVENTS

INTERNATIONAL MEETING

On the 18th and 19th February 2019, the third partners meeting of Profuce will be held at Sofia (Bulgaria). The activities implemented so far will be discussed and the forthcoming events (national and international conferences) will be planned. The Bulgarian context will be presented and discussed and some examples of good practices will be shared.

ITALY

The Profuce training course for foster families will be held the 13th, 20th, 27th of February from 18:30 to 20:30 at Villaggio SOS. The themes of the course will be interculture, characteristics of UAMs, foster families' expectations, biological families. Foster families who fostered young boys and girls in the past years have been invited. More info at : <http://www.villaggiososvicenza.it/blog/161-corso-per-l-affido-di-minori-stranieri-non-accompagnati.html>

BULGARIA

Three training courses for specialist working with foster parents will be held in the cities of Haskovo, Sliven and Sofia in the beginning of 2019: the training in Haskovo will take place on 21st and 22nd of February and those in Sofia and Sliven will take place on 28th of February and 1st of March. During the three two-day-long workshops social workers, psychologists, teachers and other specialists will be provided with the opportunity to build their capacity in supporting foster parents who are willing to take the unique challenge to care of an unaccompanied minor. (<http://knowhowcentre.nbu.bg/profuce-training/>)

GREECE

METAdrasi will provide two Profuce training courses for foster parents in the near future. The first training will be scheduled at the end of February 2019 and the second at the end of March 2019. Some of the thematic courses' subjects will be the legal and institutional framework of Foster Care in Greece, expectations of foster parents, understanding of the role of foster parents, cultural background and profile of UASCs. In March 2019, Metadrasi will organize the second professionals' training for social workers and other professionals based on the ALFACA – model.

