

Alliance for children on the move: Standard Operating Procedures for Guardians



Training Module Capacity-building of guardians to promote and protect the rights of unaccompanied children

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IDENTITY OF DELIVERABLE

This training module was developed in the context of the co-funded by the European Union's Rights, Equality and Citizenship Programme (2014-2020) entitled "Alliance for Children on the move: Standard Operating Procedures for Guardians" [REC-764244-ASOP4G]. Specifically, the deliverable D2.3 is part of the project's second work package (WP2) "Development of guardian's capacity building methodology" (Annex 1 of the Action Grant).

INTRODUCTION

Each child who is deprived of parental care has the right to be supported by a guardian. The guardian is officially appointed by the competent authorities and institutions and has the mandate to ensure the child's overall well-being, to safeguard the best interest of the child and exercise and complement the child's limited legal capacity¹. Moreover, according to the Committee on the rights of the Child, guardians "*should have the necessary expertise in the field of childcare, so as to ensure that the interests of the child are safeguarded and that the child's legal, social, health, psychological, material and educational needs are appropriately covered by, inter alia, the guardian acting as a link between the child and existing specialist agencies/individuals who provide the continuum of care required by the child.*"² Noteworthy that guardianship system is part of the child protection system in every country. At the same time, the way that guardianship is implemented across the EU or even across a single state varies.

Under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, all children without discrimination of any kind are entitled to the rights set forth in the Convention. In addition, all children deprived of parental care "are entitled to the same level of protection irrespective of their age, immigration status (i.e. EU national, legal resident, asylum seeker, migrant in an irregular situation), nationality, gender, ethnic background or any other non-discrimination ground listed in Article 21 of the EU Charter of Fundamental Rights."³ "The principle of non-discrimination also requires equal protection for all children within the state's territory, irrespective of the place of residence"⁴. Yet, in practice the situation of refugee and migrant unaccompanied children is defined primarily by their migration status.

In the framework of the project "Alliance for Children on the Move: Standard Operating Procedures for Guardians - ASOP4G" implemented in Greece, Italy, Cyprus and Lithuania, WP 2 addresses the following objectives:

- *To develop a national toolkit for enhancing the capacity of guardians and strengthen their role taking into consideration children's and guardians needs, in order to safeguard the best interests of the child effectively (toolkit shall include: the Handbook for SOPs4G, the protocol for transnational collaboration, legal index, the training module and the trainers' manual)*

¹ FRA (2015) Guardianship for children deprived of parental care: A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking

² United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child (2005), General Comment No. 6, Treatment of unaccompanied and separated children outside their country of origin, CRC/GC/2005/6, 1 September 2005

³ FRA (2015) Guardianship for children deprived of parental care: A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking, pp.26-27

⁴ Ibid., p.27

- *To evaluate the toolkit developed and the training methodology*

To this end, each project-partner organisation conducted an assessment of the guardians' and children's needs, in order to have an updated and practical view on the situation of guardianship in each country (activity 2; WP2). Based on the results of these needs assessments (Report; Deliverable D2.1), the prior experience of the partner organisations, children's and experts' opinion and the resources available already, a training module composed of a set of adaptable sessions has been designed, taking into consideration the diverse situation of guardianship in the countries involved in the project. The training has been evaluated by the participants in all four countries.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child constitutes the main point of reference for i) the training course in overall and ii) the role of the guardians together with the guidelines provided for them. The Convention is the means to explore and assess specific rights and needs of children by analysing at the same time a broad range of child-related matters. The role of the guardian is examined through the Convention's general principles which are the core of the standards in guardianship and correspond to guardianship's ultimate mission to safeguard children's best interests⁵.

The 10 core standards on guardianship represent an effective way to merge child rights' principles with principal functions that the guardian should be able to perform. They also represent an effective as well as simple map or framework that helps the guardian to promote the best interests of the child and ensure that his or her rights are recognised and safeguarded. The training introduces the 10 core standards as an umbrella for key dimensions in the guardians' role⁶, such as: Procedural/legal matters; Psycho-social aspects; Cultural mediation; Coordination and referral between services and actors⁷.

TRAINING OBJECTIVES

This training aims at enhancing the capacities of guardians in knowledge and skills in order to better safeguard the best interests and the general well-being of children. It intends to promote a child rights-based approach in the functions of guardians while providing the trainees with the possibility to familiarize with the context of unaccompanied children, the specific needs of children involved in migration processes and cultural mediation. Its general aim is to provide actual or prospective guardians with relevant information and a set of integrated and multidisciplinary elements to reinforce their knowledge and capacities in promoting and supporting the best interests of the unaccompanied child.

⁵ See also "Corso formativo e di orientamento sulla tutela volontaria di minorenni stranieri non accompagnati" (DCI Italy). Available in Italian at: <http://www.defenceforchildren.it/risorse/pubblicazioni/152-safeguard-modulo-formativo.html> and Eluce project, Training module. Available in Italian at: http://www.defenceforchildren.it/files/DCI_-_Eluce_Sicily_2018_Pagine.compressed.pdf (DCI Italy).

⁶ See EU funded project "Closing a Protection Gap". Available at: <http://www.corestandardsforguardians.com>

⁷ See footnote 5.

The training module has been developed in order to support guardians in understanding their role and duties towards representing unaccompanied children and safeguarding their rights. The training course is divided into three thematic units concerning 1) the child, 2) the guardian and 3) the relationship between them. These units consist of various sessions that are interrelated and build upon each other. This training is conceived as the initial phase of a continuous education process that should support the guardian along the realization of her/his duties.

The training sessions presented in following chapter (see Description of units' and sessions' content) are employed to address **nine specific dimensions**:

1. **Definition of a theoretical framework of guidance** based on the UNCRC regarding children's rights and child care and protection matters in accordance with the specific tasks a guardian is expected to fulfil;
2. **Comprehension of guardian's role**, mandate and their responsibilities;
3. **Description of standard operating procedures** by providing trainees with guidance in the range of their mandate, case management scenarios and possible solutions.
4. **Presentation of the national legal framework** covering reception, migration, and international protection.
5. **Mapping of services, organisations and other agencies** at national level and their responsibilities concerning unaccompanied children;
6. **Identification of psychosocial needs** of the child;
7. **Development of a trust-based relationship** with the child;
8. **Familiarisation and practice with tools** which support guardians' work
9. **Comprehension of the migration context** in terms of raising awareness on the difficult journeys, the reasons of flight and the situation that children encounter in reception countries, as well as on cultural dimensions in the communication between guardian and child.

TRAINERS & TRAINEES

Trainers of the sessions included in the training module are primarily the project's local coordinators and researchers. Trainers who hold specific expertise on particular core subjects, such as psychosocial issues, cultural mediation, legal matters and the national referral system shall be part of the trainers' team as well. Guardians with prior experience shall be invited to share their experiences and provide guidance in case management issues and procedures necessary.

As far as the trainees are concerned, each group shall consist of 20-25 participants per country who shall be selected based on their prior relevant professional experience or intention to be recruited as a guardian (depending on the country specifics). The training course has been designed for professionals or volunteers who work or intent to work with children and particularly as guardians of unaccompanied children. In each partner country there are differences regarding the professional identity of guardians: in Greece

guardians come from various professional backgrounds (social, legal and humanitarian sector), in Italy they are volunteers (not professionals), in Cyprus they are appointed social workers of the national social welfare system and in Lithuania they are social workers.

METHODOLOGY

The general objective of the training course is to provide a structured framework of reference with theoretical knowledge and practical skills that are based on international and national standards and guidelines. Both the design and the implementation of the training have been based on a reciprocal approach which allows the participants to engage actively and promote the interconnection of multi-disciplinary subject areas.

The training sessions shall be delivered with the use of presentations, discussions and exercises. One or two key-actors shall act as facilitators of the training process and ensure the smooth implementation of the training, successful delivery of training content, comprehension of analysed topics, engagement of trainees with visual aids (training material as described below), fruitful interaction between trainers and trainees by sharing knowledge and prior experience. Each module shall be delivered and supported by experts of the appropriate professional background and area of expertise, e.g. lawyer, psychologist, cultural mediator/interpreter. Selected participants who have already been working with unaccompanied children or are guardians already shall be invited to share their experiences and express their point of view acting occasionally as trainers.

The seating of the training will be arranged in a way which enables group interaction and facilitates the training process, ensuring the highest level of participation of all 20/25 trainees (e.g. circle, square, or horseshoe seating).

The facilitator may use a flip chart to enhance a presentation or discussion and keep track of all relevant elements that make up the common thoughts and reflections that emerge during the training. Role playing may facilitate occasionally key concepts to be taught. Case studies are anticipated to familiarise participants with actual cases that they may encounter.

Material to be used throughout all three unites shall be:

- Visual/electronic (PowerPoint presentations)
- Hardware (PC and Projector)
- Printed (training programme, participant's list, evaluation questionnaires, attendance certifications, handouts of case studies, project's leaflet)
- Other material (flip chart, cards, markers)

During each session the necessary information shall be provided covering the topic, together with activities and discussion notes by the facilitators in order to assist the trainees. Facilitators shall provide them with guidelines and feedback on the scheduled activities, as well as suggested additional reading.

Structure, content and their adaptability

The training module shall be distributed in three (3) days, each of one has a different thematic framework: unaccompanied children, guardians and their relationship. During each training day a series of sessions with different topics shall be delivered and are scheduled to last up to eight (8) hours in total, coffee breaks and lunch time included. However, each partner might adapt the sequence and the delivery of the various sessions according to the trainees' availability, by considering a total of 24 hours of training activities and the coverage of all foreseen sessions. Though common information shall be presented establishing common standards on the training and function of the guardians in all four countries, the analysis and the time dedicated for each session or particular topic may vary according to the country specifics (e.g. level of professional knowledge and experience, availability of trainees). Moreover, the training module shall be adapted by each partner in relation to the specificities of the national context: legislation, procedures, referral system. Each partner shall guarantee the overall transnational consistency in the delivery of a common capacity building process, while at the same time shall take into account their country's and target group's specificities. Methods employed to enhance the educating process may vary from country to country in order to be suitable to the professional background of the target group, yet a participatory and practical orientation shall underlie the training course.

Continuous training workshops

In the context of the ASOP4G project, training workshops will take place once in a month for seven months, for each group of trainees, who have already attended the 3-day foundation training course. They are scheduled to last 3 hours and to include a part of theoretical background knowledge on particular topics, as well as discussion on actual cases that guardians are handling. These sessions shall give the opportunity to the trainees to gain more insight into specific issues and discuss cases that trouble them. The topics to be addressed shall include indicatively child protection issues (e.g. trafficking and abuse), trauma and how to work with a child with special needs (e.g. traumatised, mentally ill, delinquent). More topics shall be agreed with the national facilitators and each group of trainees in order to cover the latter's needs, as these arise from their daily practice, e.g. educational issues of children, in-depth analysis of legal issues, preventing professionals' burnout.

DESCRIPTION OF UNITS' AND SESSIONS' CONTENT

While entering the room, where the training shall take place, each participant will be called to write his/her name at the attendance list. Material necessary: paper handout with specific columns for name, last name, email and professional background; 2 pens.

UNIT A: the unaccompanied child - 1st day

At the beginning of the first day, all participants shall be encouraged to introduce themselves (15 min.). They shall be asked to write their name on a small cardboard that shall be suggested to them to wear during the training. Material: cards and hangers like conference card or other material to write and wear their names; markers of black or blue colour.

The objectives of the training shall be described (5 min.). Following, the topics that will be addressed this day shall be presented (10 min.). Participants will already have a handout of the training's agenda, yet the topics shall be a briefly presented. Material to be used: flip chart paper to write down; markers of different colours.

This Unit includes four modules focusing on topics related to unaccompanied children. During the first session, children's rights in relation to guardianship as well as the specific rights which correspond to their needs shall be presented. Secondly, demographics and other data on unaccompanied children in each partner country of the project shall be presented, definition of key terminology, importance of guardianship as an essential factor of child protection policies and safeguarding of children's best interests. Next, migration shall be examined in terms of context, dynamics and management scenarios. In this context vulnerability factors and key challenges in children's lives due to their flight, as well as their resilience shall be explored. Last but not least, the national legal framework shall be briefly presented, covering issues of migration (registration, reception, family reunification) and international protection (application and guarantees, rights).

Session 1: Children's Rights as a holistic system to assess and promote the best interests of the child

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Recognize the key differences between an approach based on needs and an approach based on rights
- b) Understand the principles and the provisions of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child as a systemic and multidisciplinary map to assess, plan and promote the best interests of the child
- c) Understand how the CRC could be used as a comprehensive reference to read the context of the child, identify main stakeholders and actors, work towards an integrated, coordinated and planned response

Session 1: Children's Rights as a holistic system to assess and promote the best interests of the child		Indicative duration: 1,5 hours
Topic 1	Introducing the Convention on the Rights of the Child and the overarching principles	
Topic 2	Children's needs and children's rights: empowering children to understand their needs & evolving needs into rights	
Topic 3	The CRC as a map to ensure the child's well-being and protection in relation to guardianship	

Session 2: Unaccompanied children

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Understand what are the main characteristics of the unaccompanied minors' experiences
- b) Understand the importance and the potential of the role of the guardian

Session 2: Unaccompanied children		Indicative duration: 1 hour
Topic 1	Definition of an unaccompanied minor (based on legal definition)	
Topic 2	The significance of every child having a guardian (legal and best interests concept)	
Topic 3	Profile of children in the reception country (nationalities, ethnic origins, spoken languages, gender, age, asylum seeking)	

Session 3: Understanding the context and the cycle of migration

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Appreciate the complexity of migration by identifying "push and pull factors"
- b) Understand main features of current migration policies and approaches in the reception country vis-à-vis children rights.
- c) Identify elements and variables determining vulnerability, i.e. risk (e.g. trauma, child abuse and neglect, trafficking, substance abuse) and resilience, in child migration

Session 3: Understanding the context of migration		Indicative duration: 2 hours
Topic 1	Reasons of flight and separation (forced and voluntary migration)	
Topic 2	The path of an unaccompanied child in the reception country from the point of arrival and on	
Topic 3	The impact of separation and migration on the child: vulnerabilities and coping strategies	
Topic 4	CRC principles and children on the move	

Session 4: National legal framework concerning children and migration

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Know the main legal instruments relevant to unaccompanied children
- b) Understand the main variables that could define the situation, the status and the legal options of the child as well as his/her perspective over time

Session 4: National legal framework concerning children and migration		Indicative duration: 1,5 hour
Topic 1	Migration legal provisions – reception, registration, identification as a minor, age assessment	
Topic 2	Legal status provisions (international protection, humanitarian protection)	

UNIT B: the guardian - 2nd day

The second day of the training comprises of three sessions focusing on topics related to the guardian. More concretely, his/her role, specific duties and responsibilities shall be presented as provided by the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights, the “10 core standards for guardianship” and national law. Moving on with a more experiential orientation, guardians shall have the opportunity to learn about their duties in the field, how to respond to emergencies and how to reach decisions about a child by engaging the child and other involved actors. Following that the referral system of agencies, authorities, organizations and professionals surrounding the child shall be presented in relation to children’s needs and rights (survival, development, protection and participation). A list of resources shall complement this presentation (relevant services, agencies and institutions). Finally, guardians will be called upon to engage in a role playing for being in a position to defend the child’s best interests in an efficient way.

Session 5: The role of the guardian

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Realize what the role of the guardian is
- b) Understand his/her role as a key person to ensure the child’s best interests and rights
- c) Identify how to relate with the legislative and procedural elements that could affect the assessment and determination of the best interests of the child

Session 5: The role of the guardian		Indicative duration: 1,5 hours
Topic 1	The role of the guardian and the key mandates	
Topic 2	Guardian’s responsibilities and rights according to national law	
Topic 3	Guardianship in practice (guardian sharing experiences)	

Session 6: Case management

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Understand what the guardian needs to do in order to fulfil his/her role
- b) Engage the child and the involved actors in a meaningful way to draw a case plan and identify durable solutions for the child
- c) Know how to respond to emergency occasions, i.e. when a child is missing, presents an aggressive behaviour, hurts him/her-self, is homeless

Session 6: Case management		Indicative duration: 3 hours
Topic 1	What a guardian should do? (case studies)	
Topic 2	Description of standard operating procedures that a guardian needs to follow & variations according to care arrangements	
Topic 3	Decision making process – involving the child & other actors; resolving ethical dilemmas	
Topic 4	Emergency response (case studies)	

Session 7: Referral system

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Identify main agencies, stakeholders and actors and adopt an integrated, coordinated and planned response approach
- b) Constructively relate with the existing referral system by identifying possible gaps and opportunities
- c) Identify ways to cope with dysfunctionalities of the system and conflict situations by focusing on the best interests of the child

Session 7: Referral system		Indicative duration: 1,5 hour
Topic 1	The system of agencies and professionals surrounding the unaccompanied child based on the child's needs and rights: Responsibilities & mandate of the different organisations*	
Topic 2	Enhancing & establishing collaboration with agencies – Promoting multidisciplinary work (role playing)	

**At this point, a list of resources (relevant services, agencies, organisations) according to categories such as accommodation, health care, education, psychological support, asylum and migration, child protection, interpretation, food and personal hygiene, shall be provided to the participants.*

UNIT C: the relationship between the guardian and the child - 3rd day

This unit consists of four sessions focusing on topics related to both the guardian and the child and especially to their relationship. Initially, the developmental stages of children per age group shall be presented and with a particular emphasis on adolescents and their psychosocial needs. Furthermore, cultural issues to be considered when interacting with children of specific age groups, cultural background and gender shall be discussed. Further on, key principles for building a trust-based relationship with the child shall be explored, as well as valuable trait qualities and the impact of the guardians' personal views. In addition, the cooperation among guardian, interpreter/cultural mediator and child shall be discussed. Following, there shall be an effort to standardize the initial meetings with children in order to enhance guardian's communication and rapport with the child in an appropriate and purposeful way. Lastly, the guardians shall practice on assessment tools that they can utilize (a checklist of guardian's duties, vulnerability assessment, and best interest assessment).

Session 8: Children's developmental stages and the migration context

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Identify the interrelated elements that have to be considered for and with the child to guarantee protection and proper physical and psychosocial development
- b) Appreciate the various dimensions which are necessary to develop proper cultural mediation between the present context of the child, the culture of origin and his/her personal story

Session 8: Children's developmental stages and the migration context		Indicative duration: 2 hours
Topic 1	Children's development: what a guardian should be aware of; emphasis on adolescents	
Topic 2	Assessing the psychosocial needs of unaccompanied children	
Topic 3	Cultural considerations per age group and gender	
Topic 4	Working together with a cultural mediator / interpreter	

Session 9: Building a trust-based relationship with the child

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Properly communicate with a child and establish a healthy relationship by acting as an advocate for the child, doing no harm, being neutral and non-discriminatory, building on resilience and enhancing child participation.
- b) Identify their own perceptions and how these may influence their work or attitude
- c) Understand the main determinants and conditions which allow appropriate/active listening and interaction with the child.

Session 9: Building a trust-based relationship with the child		Indicative duration: 1,5 hour
Topic 1	Guidelines for working and communicating with children – Basic principles, building rapport & handling resistance, conflict, frustration & trauma	
Topic 2	Realizing the impact of a guardian's personal attitude	
Topic 3	Setting limits and clear roles in the child-guardian relation	
Topic 4	How the guardian should respond? (role playing)	

Session 10: Standardising the initial meetings

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Explain to a child their role and what the child should expect from him/her
- b) Explain to a child what his/her rights are the legal options
- c) Conduct discussions with a child about his/her personal story based on key ethical principles

Session 10: Standardizing the initial meetings (practical exercises based on Session's 9 theory)		Indicative duration: 1,5 hour
Topic 1	Introducing the role of the guardian to a child	
Topic 2	Explaining to a child his/her rights and responsibilities and legal options	
Topic 3	Discussing with the child about his/her personal history	

Session 11: The guardian's toolkit

Learning objectives

By participating in this training session, participants should be able to:

- a) Use tools for strategically organizing their work, which help them identify the needs of the child
- b) Use a screening tool to identify vulnerability indicators concerning the child's past, experiences and current situation
- c) Conduct a best interest assessment taking into consideration all important aspects in a child's life

Session 11: The guardian's toolkit (Suggested: presentation and case studies)		Indicative duration: 1 hour
Topic 1	Vulnerability screening tool	
Topic 2	Standard Operating Procedures for guardians: Checklist	
Topic 3	Best interests assessment	

EVALUATION

The closing session of the 3-day training has included the evaluation of the training's organization and content. A round of comments shall take place and participants shall be asked to fill in evaluation questionnaires. The aim of this evaluation is to extract meaningful feedback from all participants with regard to the training content, methods employed and structure in order to take this into consideration and if necessary, accordingly modify any elements.

Tools utilized before and after the training for its evaluation, as described in the Grant Agreement (764244-ASOP4G-REC-CHILD-AG-2016/REC-CHILD-AG-2016-02), ANNEX 1, Section 10, are the following:

- pre and post self-assessment questionnaires in order to measure the gained knowledge after the training;
- evaluation sheet on the delivery of the training; aspects to be evaluated shall be: modules, structure of training, training techniques, trainers, usefulness of training, strengths and gaps, etc., level of satisfaction and expectations met.

This training module describes the structure and content of a 3-day training for guardians, which should be considered as the foundation to support their work and function. This training is further complemented by monthly workshops on more specialised topics. A continuous training process is considered to be very valuable for supporting the guardians' work and efficiency. This suggested 3-day training can serve as a model that includes all important aspects and can be further adopted and adapted by more EU countries.