



PROUD: Promoting Supported Independent Living as an alternative care practice for unaccompanied minors

D/2.2 Report on the assessment of integration services provided to unaccompanied minors



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Abstract	<p>The primary PROUD activity is to analyse and assess the integration context and integration services provided to unaccompanied minors via semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in countries of project partners. This will be completed through the analysis of the integration context and services for unaccompanied minors in Greece, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands.</p> <p>This report analysis the existing obstacles that unaccompanied minors face while integrating into the Dutch society in terms of education, employment and vocational training as well as the challenges faced by relevant stakeholders who provide integration services (A2).</p>
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1 About PROUD

PROUD, with the full title “Promoting Supported Independent Living as an alternative care practice for unaccompanied minors” is a two-year project, funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the European Commission (AMIF-2018-AG-INTE-4) for the period 2019-2021. Overall, the project promotes supported independent living (SIL) as an alternative care practice for unaccompanied minors focused on minors aged 15-18 in four European countries. Specifically, knowledge and good practices regarding SIL are being collected, exchanged and disseminated. In addition, the project develops methodologies in order to improve the living standards of unaccompanied minors aged 15- 18 years old. In this regard, PROUD supports the capacity building of care professionals and the adoption of a mentoring scheme in order to address the integration needs of minors. The project is expected to have a high impact both in short and long term. In the short term, 200 minors of 15-18 years old are expected to benefit along with more than 500 child protection professionals. In the long term, the project is expected to positively influence EU Member States towards adopting alternative care practices.

The consortium entrusted its implementation involves expert organisations from Greece, Spain, Germany and the Netherlands. Specifically, the PROUD partnership consists of the project coordinator METAdrasi – Action for Migration and Development (Greece), Fundació Privada Idea per a la millora social d'infants i famílies (Spain), Apostoli (Greece), Centre for European Constitutional Law (Greece), Plan International Deutschland EV (Germany), Athens Lifelong Learning Institute (Greece) and Stichting Nidos (Netherlands).

2 Purpose of this Report

PROUD aims to promote supported independent living (SIL) as an alternative care practice for unaccompanied minors of 15-18 years old. Specifically, knowledge and good practices regarding SIL care are to be collected, exchanged and disseminated among participating countries through the project activities.

A key PROUD activity is to analyse and assess the integration context and integration services provided to unaccompanied minors via semi-structured interviews with stakeholders in countries of project partners. This has been conducted through the (1) Analysis of the integration context for unaccompanied minors in Greece, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands and (2) Assessment of integration services provided to unaccompanied minors in Greece, Germany, Spain and the Netherlands.

The accompanying report compiled under PROUD, “Analysis of the integration context of unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands,” provided an analysis of the realities, policies, and wider context that influence the integration of UAMs into society in the Netherlands.

This analysis focuses on conducting a targeted assessment study in the Netherlands, in terms of the integration services available to unaccompanied minors. The aim is to identify and analyse the existing obstacles that unaccompanied minors face while integrating into the participating countries’ societies in terms of education, employment and vocational training as well as the challenges faced by relevant stakeholders who provide integration services. In order to collect data, various sources and tools will be used.

3 Abbreviations and acronyms

AZC	Asylum Seekers Centre
AMV	Unaccompanied Minor Aliens
COA	Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers
CRC	UN Convention of the Rights of the Child
CRG	Child Residential Groups
DT&V	Repatriation and Departure Service
EU	European Union
IND	Immigration and Naturalization Service
ISK	International Transition Class
KWE	Kleinschalige wooneenheid (small scale residence)
KWG	Kleinschalige woongroep (small scale group residence)
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
POL	Process Reception Location
SIL	Supported independent living
SRU	Small Residential Unit
UAMs	Unaccompanied Minors

4 Report on the assessment of integration services provided to unaccompanied minors in The Netherlands

4.1 Integration services in The Netherlands

The definition of Unaccompanied Minors (UAM), according to the Dutch Law is the following: “Children are considered to be unaccompanied if they travel without their parents or the guardian and their guardian and their parents are not already present in the Netherlands. One is considered as a “child” (underage) when under the age of 18. However, an underage mother aged 16 or more can request the Juvenile Court to be emancipated in order to raise and care for one’s child¹. In case the Immigration and Naturalization Service (IND) doubts whether an asylum seeker is a child, and the child is unable to prove its identity, an age assessment can be initiated”².

Hence, unaccompanied minors (UAM) or unaccompanied minor aliens (AMV), previously referred to as are aliens under the age of 18 who, on their arrival in the Netherlands, are not accompanied by a parent or their relative by blood or marriage aged 18 or over.

According to the Organization called Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (COA), a UAM is a person:

- who was under 18 on arrival in the Netherlands,
- whose country of origin is outside the European Union, and
- who travelled to the Netherlands without a parent or other person exercising authority over them.

At the end of 2015, 6,099 UAM were registered in the Netherlands, according to the Nidos personal communication of August 24th, 2016. Based on data of the same organization, the ethnic background of children registered for guardianship is heterogeneous, since they are coming from 85 different countries. During recent years, there has been a large increase of the number of UAM entering the Netherlands, resulting in the quadrupling of asylum applications of UAM. Following, an overview is provided of the basic data from 2008 through 2015. In 2015, the Netherlands counted 3,855 asylum applications that were lodged by UAM. This is 6.6% of the total number of asylum applications in the Netherlands (58,880), according to Eurostat data of 2016. Most children came from Syria (38%), Eritrea (32% and Afghanistan (14%). Over the years, the top three countries of origin slightly changed; from Somalia, Iraq and Afghanistan in 2008 to Syria, Eritrea and Afghanistan in 2015. Afghan children have been coming during the whole period. From 2013, an ongoing increase in the number of Eritrean and Syrian children is observed. In 2015, most children were sixteen or seventeen years old (59%); however, 450 UAM under the age of fourteen applied for asylum in the Netherlands. Over the years, most UAM were sixteen or seventeen years old, followed by fourteen- and fifteen-years old. The smallest age group represented children younger than fourteen, with the division between the age groups remaining relatively stable from 2008 until 2015³.

¹ Articles 1.233 and 1.253ha, Dutch Civil Code

² Article 3.09d (2) Aliens Law 2000

³ For more information, please visit “Unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands: Legislation, policy and care”, Social Work & Society: International Online Journal, Volume 15, Issue 2, 2017 (Elianne Zijlstra, Jet Rip, Daan Beltman, Carla van Os, Erik J. Knorth, Margrite Kalverboer)

Since UAM in the Netherlands have the right to shelter, education and other, social provisions, accommodation, along with access to education, labour and vocational training are analyzed below:

4.1.1 Introduction of the available integration services for unaccompanied minors

Upon their arrival in the country a guardian is assigned to every unaccompanied child, with Nidos being the organization responsible for their appointment. Children from the age of 13 to 18 years will be accommodated in a Process Reception Location (POL). After the Process Reception Location, they will be transferred to foster families or small-scale housing. A camp's reception will only be advised if the child is able to live independently in a largescale housing. Under the Dutch Civil Code, all children must have a legal guardian (a parent or court appointed guardian). For unaccompanied children, Nidos requests to the appointment of a guardian by the juvenile court, after the child's consent. Even though the formal guardianship is assigned to the Organization, the tasks are carried out by individual professionals, called "youth protector". Guardians need to have specific qualifications and receive trainings. Some guardians have the responsibility for more than 100 unaccompanied children, an issue of efficiency since the question whether there are enough guardians is raised. Children who arrive through Schiphol airport are then transferred to the application Centre in s-Hertogenbosch (Den Bosch) and they are not detained in the AC Schiphol if their minority is not disputed.⁴

A. Accommodation

The place of UAM's allocation to be accommodated is further segregated based upon their age and whether or not they have acquired a residence permit. UAM under the age of 13 are placed with foster families by the Nidos Foundation. Those who are 15 years or over, along with 13-14 years old who cannot be placed with foster families, are given accommodation by COA, housed in small-scale housing facilities with 24-hour supervision (if they do not have a residence permit). UAM aged 15-18 with a residence permit are given accommodation in living groups or living units facilitated by youth Organizations under contract with Nidos.

• Foster Families

To an increasing extent, young people, aged up to 13 years of age, are received in foster families, preferably families of (former or current) fellow-countrymen, in the context of the Reception and Living in Family Project developed by Nidos. It partly concerns families from the networks of relatives or friends.⁵ Being hosted in families with either the same cultural background or talking the same language or even originated from the same country, has the advantage of familiarity to the beneficiaries. After the long trip to end up in a foreign country, without their parents or any close relatives, the solution of "foster families" is a strong asset to increase their self-esteem and develop the necessary knowledge and skills during their first steps in a foreign unknown environment.

In respect of unaccompanied minors who stay in foster families, Nidos explicitly includes in its screening process for foster families the question of whether the foster parents are capable of and prepared to receive unaccompanied minors to whom the prospect of 'return' applies. The discussion includes explicit questions regarding their expectations and wishes and what the

⁴ Page 32, AIDA: Asylum Information Database, "National Country Report, the Netherlands", European Council on Refugees and Exiles, 28/03/2014

⁵ Page 35, EMN Study entitled "Unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands: Policy on Reception, Return and Integration arrangements for, and numbers of, unaccompanied minors" Dutch National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN), February 2010

consequence of a specific outcome of the asylum or regular unaccompanied minor procedure will be for both the unaccompanied minor and the foster parents themselves.

- **Small- scale reception facilities**

Fifteen- through eighteen-year-olds, in possession of a residence permit, are placed in small care facilities. There are two types of small-scale reception facilities. The first is a small living group which accommodates twelve to twenty children (with a residence permit) and provides 24-hour supervision. The small living group is situated in the neighborhood of a village or city. The supervision is aimed at increasing the self-reliance of UAM so they can move on to the small living unit (type two). In a small living unit, children with a residence permit, live together with three or four young persons. Supervision is available for a few hours a day (28.5 hours a week) and young persons can stay there until they are eighteen. The supervisors prepare them for independent living in Dutch society. A small living unit is situated in the neighborhood of a village or city, as stated in 2015 Child Rights Monitor and an equivalent of 2016 from Nidos.

- **Small- scale housing facilities**

COA places UAMs from the age of 15 without residence permit in small-scale housing facilities. The same goes for young people aged 13-14 years without residence permit for whom Nidos has no foster family available yet. There, COA and Nidos both share responsibility for the reception and support of unaccompanied minors.

Such facilities can host up to 16-20 young people living together. The small-scale housing facilities operate either inside or outside a Reception Centre. In facilities outside a Reception Centre, which are for UAM who are younger than 17.5 years when they arrive in the Netherlands, young people are given support 24/7. The small-scale housing facilities in a Reception Centre are for UAMs from the age of 17.5 who are sufficiently independent and need less guidance and support. This way, they can easily transition to the Reception Centre when they turn 18.

Small-scale housing facilities have been divided among regions, with a total reception capacity of no more than 100 persons within a circumference of around 15 km, although COA's intention is not to transfer young people to another region. The main reason behind this decision is to increase familiarity of resident with the environment they live in. Successively, that enables their future integration in the social context, beneficiaries remain at the same school, whereas they have the opportunity to develop social contacts.

COA staff are available 24 hours a day providing the young people guidance and support in their development into adulthood. In case beneficiaries are called to repatriate, they are supported in this by the Repatriation and Departure Service (DT&V).

In order to facilitate their incorporation and integration in the national context, beneficiaries are provided with a COA professional, who is always around and knows which support they need. The professional teaches them about Dutch habits and customs, they might work together on developing skills, such as going to school on time or independently making an appointment with the GP. Young people can also have empowerment training in the small-scale housing facilities or a protected reception facility.

The professional and the young person map out the current skills, formulate development objectives and record them in a counselling plan. They coordinate the objectives with the Nidos guardian. With the guidance of their guardian, the young people regularly work on their objectives aiming at enhancing their self-esteem and independence.

In order to promote their social integration, beneficiaries, with the support of COA personnel, undertake the same “social” activities as Dutch persons with the same age: they go to school, they exercise, watch films, or join either COA activities or activities in the area⁶.

B. Employment

According to Article 32 of the UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC) “States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.” Moreover, it is stated in the Convention that minimum working age(s) should be provided for as well as the regulation of the working conditions and hours of employment and measures to ensure the effective enforcement of article 32.

The Netherlands satisfies this article, since the possibilities minors have to work depend on the type of residence permit and status of the asylum process. The possibility of access to the Dutch labour market for unaccompanied minors is dependent on the type and status of their residence permit procedure. An unaccompanied minor whose asylum procedure is still pending and in respect of whose application a decision has not yet been made is permitted to perform work for 24 weeks a year. By establishing these periods of time, asylum seekers are prevented from building up rights under the Unemployed Insurance Act (Werkloosheidswet).

If no adequate reception is available in the country of origin and an unaccompanied minor is permitted to stay in the Netherlands on this basis, the unaccompanied minor is permitted to perform work subject to the condition that the employer has a work permit. This permit may be issued to the employer if the unaccompanied minor does not perform work for more than 24 weeks (maximum) within a term of 52 weeks. If the asylum application of the unaccompanied minor has been granted, he or she is permitted to perform work without the restrictions mentioned above.

In situations in which work is performed by a minor, the Dutch Labour Act (Arbeidswet) applies. Pursuant to this Act, upon employment of a minor, the employer is obliged to take account of the time the minor is to spend on education, leisure time, and such like. The age at which a minor may perform work is, in principle, 14 years of age. As the age of a minor increases, he or she is permitted to perform heavier work. A minor of 16 years of age is permitted to operate light machines; from 18 years of age a young person is also permitted to operate dangerous machines.

C. Education

According to Article 3 of the Compulsory Education Act, education is mandatory for every child under 18, including asylum seekers.⁷ Specifically, education is mandatory for children aged 5-16. Children aged 16-18 that have not yet obtained a basic qualification are obligated to follow education to obtain such a basic qualification. Asylum- seeking children have the same rights to education as Dutch children or children who are treated in the same way, e.g., children with a residence permit. Children below 12 go to elementary school, at the school nearby the Asylum Seekers Centre (AZC) or at the AZC itself. Children between the age of 12 and 18 are first taught in an international class. According to their level of Dutch, whether it is sufficient or not, they subsequently enroll in the suitable education program.⁸ Unaccompanied minors who stay

⁶ For more information, please visit: <https://www.coa.nl/en/unaccompanied-minors>

⁷ Law of 30 May 1968 houdende vaststelling Leerplichtwet 1969

⁸ More information available at:

in the Netherlands are obliged to attend school, falling under the aforementioned Act, irrespective of their residence status. All UAMs have the same access to education as Dutch minors, depending on their knowledge of the Dutch language.

Thus, UAM, irrespective of their residence status, have the right to receive an education. In consultation with the municipality and school boards, a suitable place – in either primary, secondary, or vocational education – needs to be found. The municipality where the child stays is responsible for the school accommodation (Buisman et al. 2016). Primary education for children can take place in an asylum-seeking Centre as well as in a ‘regular’ primary school. Children start in specific language classes where they learn Dutch and from there they move to regular education. In regular education, attention is also paid to mastering Dutch and learning about Dutch culture. Children who on arrival are at the age of secondary education (12 years) will start in an ‘Internationale Schakel Klas’ [International Transition Class] (ISK) where they can stay for a maximum of two years (Minister and State secretary of Education, Culture and Science 2015). With a large focus on language education (80%) in the ISK, children will be prepared for regular education (VNG 2016). By mastering a sufficient level of the Dutch language, the child can attend regular education (LOWAN 2016). There are worries about the quality of education for asylum-seeking children. For instance, teachers are not always sufficiently trained to teach illiterate people (Minister and State secretary of Education, Culture and Science 2015)⁹.

For UAM without a residence permit, COA and Nidos jointly determine the daily activities of the unaccompanied minor and, where applicable, the form of education, depending on the prospect of return or integration. These subdivisions enable the unaccompanied minor to prepare for either a future in the Netherlands or in the country of origin. In the case of the prospect of return, the unaccompanied minor is also linked to an employee of the DT&V in order to affect the return¹⁰. Further, UAM aged 16- 17 that want to go back to their country of origin receive a special education that is apt/suitable for their stay there. COA offers various activities for asylum seekers and status holders, focusing on the Dutch language and education programs.

Following that in the Netherlands, compulsory education ends at the age of 18, policy goals for the professional development of refugees are rather limited to a short term, vocational training oriented perspective¹¹. Hence, support mechanisms focus on the transition and immersion phase. According to the RVA, COA provides access to educational programmes for adults at the AZC. Depending on the stage of the asylum application, COA offers different educational programmes including vocational training. Refugees who have been granted a residence permit can still be offered an educational programme¹². Within this context, efforts are therefore made to place these young adults in senior secondary vocational education. Senior secondary vocational schools provide language support and/or civic integration courses for refugees aged 18 and older. A cohort survey (2009-2014) shows that approximately 70% of ISK students

<https://asylumineurope.org/reports/country/netherlands/reception-conditions/employment-and-education/access-education/>

⁹ page 5, «Unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands: Legislation, policy, and care», Social Work and Society: International Online Journal, Volume 15, Issue 2, 2017 (Elianne Zijlstra, Jet Rip, Daan Beltman, Carla van Os, Erik J. Knorth, Margrite Kalverboer)

¹⁰ Page 7, EMN Study “Unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands: Policy on Reception, Return and Integration arrangements for, and numbers of, unaccompanied minors”, Dutch National Contact Point for the European Migration Network (EMN), February 2010

¹¹ For more information: Continuity of learning for newly arrived refugee children in Europe, NESET II ad hoc question No. 1/2017 (Claudia Koehler)

¹² Article 9(3)(d) and Article 12(1) RVA (Regulation on benefits for asylum seekers and other categories of foreigners)

continue to senior secondary vocational education, mainly to levels 1 and 2, though in some cases to levels 3 and 4¹³. In principle, minors who are 16 years of age or older are obliged to pay a tuition fee. Unaccompanied minors may be granted an exemption from paying the tuition fee.

D. Vocational Training

Refugee children are included in the national education system, but they are largely streamed into the (lowest) vocational streams. A student arriving in the country at age twelve or later has already missed the crucial national test that determines his or her tracking advice. These students are placed in an ISK immersion class for one or two years. By the time they are admitted to the regular classes, they often lag far behind in terms of the level of instruction in the subjects in the academic track. This will, regardless of their intellectual capacities, de facto mean placement in one of the vocational tracks in year 3 or 4. And there, year 4 is the exam year. According to a recent survey, 70 percent of the children going to ISK immersion classes from there enter the lowest forms of vocational education¹⁴. Some schools apply a strategy of assessing the prior education and social and family conditions of each child, together with the parents or caretaker, and design an individual learning schedule. Schools are encouraged to give parents regular updates on the learning progress of the child in order to ensure continuity and avoid class repetition¹⁵.

For those who do not have an official status yet, the right to start a study ends at age of eighteen, the end of the compulsory schooling age. Those who, at age eighteen, do not yet have the (temporary) resident permit granted cannot start a study in post-secondary or higher education. Many of the young refugees that started late in the Dutch educational system find themselves in a low-level vocational track, finishing it when they are around eighteen years old. Hence, the aim seems much more limited and short term since most policy measures are aimed at, and limited to, the transition phase or immersion phase. In combination with the early tracking, characteristic of the country, refugee students mostly end up in the (lowest) vocational tracks¹⁶.

Member States undertake a form of individual assessment to ensure that the education provided corresponds to the specific needs of the unaccompanied minors, which is usually accompanied by the development of an education plan for each minor, often together with the legal guardian, social workers and the schools. In the Netherlands, it is specified that an intake method has been developed for newcomers who want to enter secondary education. For unaccompanied minors with no prospect of obtaining a legal residence permit, this education is geared towards learning an occupation that will later enable them to find employment in their country of origin.

¹³ Page 13, SIRIUS - Policy Network on Migrant Education «MULTI-COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKING YOUTH IN EUROPE – PERAE 2018», Refugee Education in the Netherlands (T. Tadjman, A. van den Heerik, E. le Pichon, S. Baauw), October 2016

¹⁴ Page 2- 5, SIRIUS Network Policy Brief Series “Refugee children in education in Europe. How to prevent a lost generation?”, Prof. Maurice Crul (VU University Amsterdam and Erasmus University Rotterdam), February 2017

¹⁵ Page 9, Continuity of learning for newly arrived refugee children in Europe, NESET II ad hoc question No. 1/2017 (Claudia Koehler)

¹⁶ Page 2- 5, SIRIUS Network Policy Brief Series “Refugee children in education in Europe. How to prevent a lost generation?”, Prof. Maurice Crul (VU University Amsterdam and Erasmus University Rotterdam), February 2017

4.1.2 Obstacles that unaccompanied minors face towards integration in terms of education, employment and vocational training

A. Education

The provision of high-quality educational services, focused on the needs and the previous academic credentials and curricula of the beneficiaries, require the existence of teachers, who are able to meet the diverse needs of all students and foster tolerance, respect for diversity and civic responsibility. The Netherlands, among most European countries, is already facing challenges in matching teaching methods and quality with the needs of diverse classrooms, the challenges intensified with the arrival of large numbers of refugee students and their particular needs. According to the Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), working with multicultural and multilingual students is one of the areas that teachers feel the least prepared for. In the Netherlands, among other EU countries, many teachers are not trained or have no experience with general issues of migration and diversity, to work with refugee students and their particular needs, to teach the national language as a second language, to provide psychosocial guidance, and to enable connections with students' prior knowledge. Similarly, due to refugees being moved around frequently, municipalities are often not prepared for new arrivals and lack appropriate facilities and staff. Emergency reception centres have been opened up in municipalities that had no prior experience in teaching refugees, which compromises the quality of teaching. Additionally, there are no national laws or guidelines in the Netherlands on how to acquire additional teaching skills for teachers of newly arrived students¹⁷. Subsequently, the provision of teaching personnel, with expertise to adjust and provide academic curricula, according to the special, personalised needs of the beneficiaries, taking into consideration, not only their academic background, but also their sensitive psychological and family status, is a crucial prerequisite for the future integration in the country's social context. Unless beneficiaries receive the necessary educational qualifications and credentials, beginning from the education level, their subsequent integration in the labour market and the social context is at stake, with all phenomena of xenophobia that might cause.

However, there are several factors that seem to indicate that the Dutch policies do not completely satisfy the unaccompanied minors' right to education. There are no provisions in the country for the very young refugee children to access pre-school¹⁸. Further, for those who do not have an official status yet, the right to start a study ends at the age of eighteen, the end of the compulsory schooling age. Many of the young refugees that started late in the Dutch educational system find themselves in a low-level vocational track, finishing it when they are around eighteen years old.

Further, given that the effects of tracking and early selection, the starting age in education of refugee children is crucial. A student arriving in the Netherlands at age twelve or later already missed the crucial national test that determines his or her tracking advice. These students are placed in an ISK immersion class for one or two years¹⁹. By the time they are admitted to the regular classes they often lag far behind in terms of the level of instruction in the subjects in the academic track. This will, regardless of their intellectual capacities, de facto mean placement in one of the vocational tracks in year 3 or 4. And there, year 4 is the exam year. According to

¹⁷ For more information refer to "Continuity of learning for newly arrived refugee children in Europe, NESET II ad hoc question No. 1/2017" (Claudia Koehler)

¹⁸ SIRIUS - Policy Network on Migrant Education «MULTI-COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKING YOUTH IN EUROPE – PERAE 2018», Refugee Education in the Netherlands (T. Tudjman, A. van den Heerik, E. le Pichon, S. Baauw), October 2016

¹⁹ Dourelijn and Dagevos 2011, 95; Stavenuiter et al. 2016,

a recent survey, 70% of the children going to ISK immersion classes from there enter the lowest forms of vocational education. These tracks are known for their high levels of disruption in the classroom and the high drop-out rates. This school climate is hardly conducive for refugee children who often have to deal with trauma and whose intellectual capacities often far exceed those of the other children in these tracks²⁰.

Another problem is the long waiting times to join a school. This was particularly the case for the children residing at specific areas, such as Xonar, one of the youth health organizations at which the small-scale reception in Child Residential Groups (CRGs) and Small Residential Units (SRUs) is outsourced. In such cases, several boys had not been able to go to school yet as there were not sufficient places at the school to accommodate them.

Moreover, difficulties were mentioned by professionals in making the arrangements for UAMs to do an internship. Some of the UAMs at the camps were doing an internship as part of their studies for which they could get paid. However, for this they need a permit (tewerkstellingsvergunning), and the IND does not tend to cooperate. In light of the UAMs' right to education, it should be possible for the minors to complete their studies by doing an internship. Minors have also complained that the classes at the school on camps were often very chaotic and that there is a lack of facilities for children to do their homework in a quiet place.

Another common problem is the effect of the asylum process on the children's motivation to attend school and the psychological problems it causes, which negatively affect their school performance. Professionals quite regularly encounter the problem that young people are not motivated to go to school and this lack of motivation is particularly apparent among those whose asylum claim has been rejected. The professionals try to get the children out of bed in the morning and convince them to go to school, thereby appearing to satisfy article 28e, which states that measures should be taken to "encourage regular attendance at schools and the reduction of drop-out rates". Nevertheless, these measures are not always effective. Most of the minors said that their mind was occupied with problems, making it hard to concentrate and learn. Therefore, it seems that the children's enjoyment of the right to education is prevented or at the least inhibited by the rejection of the asylum claim²¹.

It is prominent, that although the Dutch educational system is relatively open towards the inclusion of minor asylum seekers/ refugees within the formal educational systems, and it has developed the necessary anticipations for their support, with the provision of the necessary means, such as special language classes and the provision of academic personnel, there are a number of administrative obstacles that need to be taken care of. The provision of education services is not independent and contradictable from other benefits, such as accommodation and social welfare. In order for the academic personnel to exercise its duties and invest in the efficient and long-term schooling of UAM, they do not only need to possess the necessary expertise credentials to deal with such a sensitive and vulnerable beneficiary group. The formal education system needs to take into consideration the needs and the challenges of the beneficiary group, as an overall policy investment and policy making for the provision of the necessary means to integrate in the country.

²⁰ For more information, refer to SIRIUS, Network Policy Brief Series "Refugee children in education in Europe. How to prevent a lost generation?", Prof. Maurice Crul (VU University Amsterdam and Erasmus University Rotterdam), February 2017

²¹ For more information, refer to UNU-MERIT Working Paper Series "Afghan unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands: Far away from home and protected?", Carla Buil and Melissa Siegel, United Nations University (UNU-MERIT), 2014

B. Employment

In terms of employment, unaccompanied minors do not face with any legal obstacles to get employed. As stipulated in Article 32 of the CRC, “States Parties recognize the right of the child to be protected from economic exploitation and from performing any work that is likely to be hazardous or to interfere with the child’s education, or to be harmful to the child’s health or physical, mental, spiritual, moral or social development.” Moreover, it states that minimum working age(s) should be provided for as well as regulation of the working conditions and hours of employment and measures to ensure the effective enforcement of article 32²².

The Netherlands seems to satisfy this article. As stated in the EMN Report, the possibilities minors have to work depend on the type of residence permit and status of the asylum process. In the case that the asylum claim is still pending an unaccompanied minor is only permitted to work for 24 weeks a year, whereas this restriction is not applicable to a minor who has been granted asylum. Moreover, if an unaccompanied minor asylum seeker is allowed to work, the Dutch Labour Act (Arbeidswet) applies where the minimum working age is 14. The type of work a minor is permitted to do varies, dependent on age²³.

As regards asylum seekers in general, the Dutch legislation provides them with access to the labour market. However, in practice, it is hard for an asylum seeker to find a job. Employers are not always willing to contract an asylum seeker due to administrative hurdles²⁴. Before the Asylum Seeker starts the work, the employer must request for an employment-license (tewerkstellingsvergunning) where the Asylum Seeker should fulfil a series of certain conditions as follows:

- the asylum application has been lodged at least six months before and is still pending for a (final) decision,
- the asylum seeker is staying legally in the Netherlands on the basis of Article 8, under f or h of the Aliens Act,
- the asylum seeker is provided reception conditions as they come within the scope of the 2005 Regulation on benefits for asylum seekers, the Regulation on Reception for asylum seekers, or under the responsibility of Nidos,
- the asylum seeker does not exceed the maximum time limit of employment (24 weeks per 12 months),
- the intended work is conducted under general labour market conditions,
- the employer submits a copy of the W-document (identity card).

This procedure does not take longer than 5 weeks. However, this constitutes an administrative obstacle which discourages employers from contracting an asylum seeker.

C. Vocational Training

In the Netherlands, students who have the cognitive and intellectual skills to follow the academic track are often advised to enter the vocational track because of their insufficient language skills, or because school advisors may make misjudgments at the end of primary education (Koehler et al., forthcoming). Entering a lower secondary path effectively means that a student is channeled towards vocational training and has little chance of switching to an academic path. Policies of those countries that particularly target vocational careers for

²² UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (CRC)

²³ Pp 11-12, UNU-MERIT Working Paper Series “Afghan unaccompanied minors in the Netherlands: Far away from home and protected?”, Carla Buil and Melissa Siegel, United Nations University (UNU-MERIT), 2014

²⁴ Pp. 46, Aida, Asylum Information database, National Country Report, The Netherlands, 2014

refugees sustain this system; for example, they may present lower secondary schools as the 'normal path' to refugees, while at the same time the majority of native students attend higher secondary schools. Hence, disproportionately high numbers of refugee students attend the vocational tracks of secondary schools²⁵. Subsequently, these disproportional numbers have a twofold consequence: on the one hand, students do not receive the targeted attention and guidance they ought to, according to a personalized curriculum based upon their needs and background. On the other hand, the official educational and vocational system has reached its limits as the number of students per class is beyond the number that it can afford. Thus, the vocational services lack high quality.

Another issue is the progression of newcomers into senior secondary vocational education, with partnership being formed in many municipalities to ease this issue by developing profiles and learning programmes that can be used to provide an appropriate combination of subjects to newcomers. It is important in this regard for the level of newcomers to be determined not only by their language proficiency. Their other skills, talents and prior education in the country of origin must also be taken into account. The education programme of an ISK student must therefore focus on the student's future possibilities. The ISK period must be dedicated to preparing the student for progression into senior secondary vocational education at the right level. The following solutions have been formulated:

- Improve the provision of information for potential refugee students and their guides regarding senior secondary vocational education and preparatory programmes.
- Identify possible senior secondary vocational preparatory programmes for refugee students and share this knowledge.
- Create appropriate practical training places for potential refugee students.

Simplify the testing process by making B1 language level the equivalent of 2F language level in the context of the language examination programme.²⁶

4.1.3 Challenges that stakeholders face in terms of integrating unaccompanied minors

Education

In the process of the high numbers of new arrivals since 2015, the education systems in several EU countries reached their performance limits, with the need for additional resources was met in some cases, with governmental support being available for newly arrived students, who are in possession of a residence permit. Many EU countries increased their budgets for education in response to the increased numbers of these new arrivals. In many countries, additional funding is provided for opening up classes for newly arrived students and hiring additional teachers. However, challenges may arise when this funding is directly related to the number of refugee students: in the Netherlands, where there is high fluctuation of refugee students because of them being frequently moved, schools are hesitant to hire additional teachers, open up new classes and purchase extra materials when student numbers are high because they cannot rely on the numbers to remain high. In the event of a sudden decrease of student

²⁵ Page 13, "Continuity of learning for newly arrived refugee children in Europe, NESET II ad hoc question No. 1/2017", Claudia Koehler, 2017

²⁶ Pages 13- 14, SIRIUS - Policy Network on Migrant Education "MULTI-COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKING YOUTH IN EUROPE – PERAE", Refugee Education in the Netherlands (T. Tudjman, A. van den Heerik, E. le Pichon, S. Baauw), October 2016

numbers they would be left with the additional expenses (Koehler et al., forthcoming, Tudjman et al., 2016)²⁷.

Unless the necessary funds are secured and reserved for the Dutch educational system, the country will not be in the position of designing and implementing a long-term educational policy, addressed to UAM, based on their personalized needs. Since the educational system is not cut off from other services, including accommodation and social welfare, the provided services need to be based on a long-term policy, with specific modules and curricula, well-educated academic personnel and the necessary infrastructure, targeting on long term goals per student. If a school administration or a teacher knows that a UAM student will leave the class during the academic year, they will lack efforts to provide it with the necessary education tools and materials. Even worse, they will not exercise their full education capacity, with all subsequent implications on the child's education and further inclusion in the country's. Unless there is long term strategic planning, with the proper funding, according to the analogous needs of each school, the aforementioned goal will not be achieved.

Moreover, as in primary education, at a number of emergency Reception Centers, four-year-olds cannot go to school, whereas all Dutch children are given access to education from the age of four. The societal standard that applies in the Netherlands regarding school attendance is not applied in the case of asylum seeker children. In Heumensoord for example, it is indeed the case that children can only go to school after they have reached the age of five. In the emergency Reception Centre in Gorinchem that the Ombudsman for Children visited, children go to school from the age of four. Early and preschool education is also not available to asylum seeker children. Further, schools do not receive funding for interpreters. While interpreters are not necessary for the provision of education, they are of major importance in terms of communicating with parents in the context of primary education. Communication with parents is a problem that teachers face during the intake process and on other occasions. In secondary education, concerns are mainly about students who can no longer progress to mainstream education. Because ISKs do not provide formal education, students who attend these classes cannot obtain a secondary education certificate. Children aged 16 or 17 who receive ISK education usually do not progress to mainstream education and therefore leave school without a secondary education certificate. Because the children referred to were unable to obtain a secondary education certificate, they often end up in a senior secondary vocational education level 1 (starter training) programme. Young people who are in principle capable of handling a higher level of education are mostly given access to education that is below their level of ability. In addition, individuals aged between 18 and 20 are formally no longer children and therefore do not attend ISKs. In principle, they still have access to ISK education, but many schools do not have arrangements in place to provide education for this older target group. Some of these individuals also enter level 1 of senior secondary vocational education or look for work after being granted residency status. Individuals in both groups have an educational disadvantage as a result of their arrival in the Netherlands and are unable to eliminate this disadvantage because of the fact that they are not given the opportunity to obtain a secondary education certificate²⁸.

²⁷ Pages 18- 19, "Continuity of learning for newly arrived refugee children in Europe, NESET II ad hoc question No. 1/2017", Claudia Koehler, 2017

²⁸ Pages 19-20, SIRIUS - Policy Network on Migrant Education "MULTI-COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKING YOUTH IN EUROPE – PERAE", Refugee Education in the Netherlands (T. Tudjman, A. van den Heerik, E. le Pichon, S. Baauw), October 2016

1. Employment

Despite UAM are entitled to work, they are faced with the reluctance of employers to employ an asylum seeker, let alone a minor. Employers are not eager to contract an asylum seeker due to assumed administrative hurdles and the supply on the labour market. This situation is deteriorating when the issue of minors is raised, since they have to attend classes and also spend some time on leisure. Hence, a candidate employer is reluctant to recruit a UAM, due to the lack, not only of concentration of his duties, but also minimum performance, due to other priorities (attendance to school classes, priority to leisure/ games, etc.).

Hence, the policy priority from the side of the government, needs to be twofold. Firstly, they can provide employers with motives to employ UAM, even on a part-time basis. For instance, part of the salary of a UAM, or his social insurance, can be funded by the state for a period of time. Tax exclusion can be a strong asset for an employer to hire a UAM. On the other hand, UAM need to possess the necessary skills and technical know-how for their future integration not only in the Dutch labour market, but also society, as integral part.

2. Vocational Training

The senior secondary vocational school apparently does not provide any specific programmes or educational opportunities for students who have a refugee background. This means that refugees must meet the same admission requirements, including that of language level, as their non-refugee peers to be able to enter mainstream senior secondary vocational education. Meeting these requirements is often impossible in practice because refugees only receive language training for one or two years in an ISK. After ISK, some do not receive any formal education at all. Their command of Dutch is often inadequate and they are not admitted to a senior secondary vocational school. National performance agreements apply to senior secondary vocational schools. Under these agreements, if students do not complete their programmes successfully, the school concerned loses income. Contrary to the situation in primary education and secondary education, no additional funding is available for refugees in senior secondary vocational education. At the time that this study was being carried out, Zadkine, a senior secondary vocational school, was holding talks with other schools and the municipality of Rotterdam to improve educational opportunities for young refugees (often aged 16 to 18). The respondent stated that “we’re basically at the beginning when it comes to refugees in senior secondary vocational education”²⁹. This situation is mainly based on the lack of a decisive long-term policy, which will have undertaken the necessary logistical and administrative means for overcoming any barriers and simplifying the processes for the beneficiaries’ integration in the vocational market. Indicative initial steps towards establishing and improving of a vocational system, adjusted to the UAM special conditions are information provision for potential refugee students for senior secondary vocational education and preparatory programmes, the identification of possible senior secondary vocational preparatory programmes for refugee students, the creation of appropriate practical training places for potential refugee students and the simplification of the testing process by making B1 the equivalent of 2F (language concerned) in the context of the language examination programme³⁰.

²⁹ Page 32, SIRIUS - Policy Network on Migrant Education “MULTI-COUNTRY PARTNERSHIP TO ENHANCE THE EDUCATION OF REFUGEE AND ASYLUM-SEEKING YOUTH IN EUROPE – PERAE”, Refugee Education in the Netherlands (T. Tudjman, A. van den Heerik, E. le Pichon, S. Baauw), October 2016

³⁰ *ibid*

4.2 Assessment of the integration services in The Netherlands

This section is based on fieldwork carried out among representatives of national and local authorities (stakeholders), professionals working with UAMs, and the (ex-)UAMs themselves. The field research provides different perspectives on the capacities, challenges and gaps of integration services provided to UAMs in the Netherlands. For the purpose of coherence there is some overlap with the previous sections, but the focus here is on daily practice.

4.2.1 Stakeholders' assessment of integration services

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with representatives of four municipalities, the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment, the Ministry of Justice and Security, and COA (NA1-7). During the interviews use was made of a topic list, placing an emphasis on the expertise of the interviewee.

Actors responsible for integration services

All UAM affairs are arranged either via Nidos guardians, COA (for those without a residence permit), and Nidos housing or youth care Organizations subcontracted by Nidos (for those with a residence permit). The Ministry of Justice and Security is the commissioner and supervisor.

The UAMs without a residence permit living at COA locations are not subject to integration services as such, because without a residence permit, they are not required to integrate. But as minors they do have to go to school where they learn the Dutch language. In addition, the support they receive from COA mentors pays attention to their future. The support provided by COA mentors is described as such:

Mentors check-in with UAMs every six weeks to look at the goals that have been determined together with the UAM. How is it going, what do you still want to work on? This covers different themes: practical skills like cooking and cleaning, social skills, sex education, etc. We also discuss what they want to do in terms of school and future education. (NA7)

The interviews with representatives of national authorities do not give much insight on the guidance provided by Nidos guardians and mentors at accommodation subcontracted by Nidos. These integration services are described by the interviewed professionals in section 4.2.2 below.

Interviews with two national authorities (NA2, NA7) indicate that there is little to no contact between COA and the youth care organizations that facilitate accommodation for Nidos. 'There is no interaction with Organizations that facilitate housing of UAMs for Nidos' (NA7). This gives the impression that the services provided to UAMs without a residence permit is organized separately from the services provided to UAMs with a residence permit. This is in line with the reception model for unaccompanied minors that has been in force since 2016 (described in section 2.1.2 of deliverable 2.1).

Another main observation made by different interviewees concerning the integration services for UAMs is that the central government is responsible for the care of UAMs until they turn 18, after which municipalities become responsible for the welfare of former UAMs. Officially this means municipalities have no responsibility for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers and are not formally informed when UAMs come to live in their municipality. In practice such a clear division of responsibilities proves untenable. As representatives of two different municipality explain:

Officially this not our role. That is the issue with UAMs. Officially it is the responsibility of the central government, but UAMs are always located in a municipality. And this is not officially

recognized, so as municipality we discover the issues of UAMs via incidents such as suicide attempts. (NA4)

It just depends on the municipality how it is dealt with. From 18, the municipality is responsible and there is no specific attention for this target group, it just falls under normal social support. That didn't work for us. We had large groups of loitering youths, troubles with social housing, school dropout. If you concentrate so many young people and let go of them without support from 18, that cannot go well. We have hundreds. (NA3)

The other municipalities also describe issues such as public loitering and disorder, debt and psychological problems that have led them to develop policy on UAMs and ex-UAMs. The interviews indicate that different municipalities have therefore started to play a role in integration services for UAMs.

Municipal integration services

All four interviewed municipalities state that facilitating the transition of UAMs to adulthood is a challenge. They have been living a supported life with a Nidos guardian, facilitated accommodation and a mentor and when they turn 18 this all falls away. Although municipalities seem to have been organizing services for ex-UAMs to a smaller or larger extent for years, it is especially since the large influx of migrants in 2015 that municipalities have become more involved and have also started to pay attention to integration services for UAMs. Because municipalities are not formally responsible for UAMs and because there is no national policy for ex-UAMs these municipal services differ per municipality. Three examples of municipal integration services for (ex)-UAMs based on the interviews are described here.

One municipality (NA5) began receiving more UAMs in 2017 and now has about 113 UAMs living in the municipality. Since 2017, the municipality put ex-UAMs with a residence permit in shared housing when they turn 18. At first with only a few hours of social support, but in the last six months they have started to arrange more social care for this group due to arising issues. The social housing cooperation that arranged the shared housing had complaints about dirty houses, debt and psychosocial problems, so it became clear that more social support is necessary. At the same time the municipality realized these problems might be prevented if they become involved with ex-UAMs before they turn 18. Therefore, they have arranged a social support team for young asylum seekers and a consultation structure for UAMs who are almost 18. The interviewee describes both initiatives as such:

We have a team for young people with a residence permit who have all young asylum seekers in their caseload, including UAMs aged 17-23. This is the municipal counter for any services for this target group. These are dedicated advisors who have been trained to work with asylum seekers. [...] Next to this we now have a consultation structure where we discuss each UAM from 17,5 years with all relevant partners: social housing, Nidos, our youth adviser UAM, and social care advisors.

Another municipality (NA3) has a large group of UAMs and ex-UAMs since 2016, about 250 aged 15-23. This municipality developed an integrated approach for UAMs starting at age 17, because they discovered preventive measures were necessary to have less inconvenience after UAMs turn 18. The interviewee describes their approach as follows:

At the age of 17 we have a case discussion with all parties. How is it going at school? How is family reunification going? Are there any financial problems? With 17.5 we have another case discussion like this. At 17 years and 10 months, we have a case meeting in which we decide: is this young person ready to live independently? (NA3)

As with the other municipality this approach also takes the form of a consultation structure between different stakeholders, except that more parties seem to be involved. The interviewee lists the following stakeholders that may attend the UAM case discussions:

International Transition Class, entry level vocational education, Nidos, SIL mentors, COA, officer for UAMs with social support benefits, policy officer for housing, school attendance policy officer, Dutch Refugee Council, a sport coach (who plays sports with UAMs to connect with them and motivate them), theater coach (similar to the sports coach but from a cultural approach), youth care. (NA3)

A third municipality (NA4) takes yet another approach. This municipality has a longer history of working with ex-UAMs and has been organizing support for ex-UAMs since 2003. This support has resulted in a support center for ex-UAMs financed by the municipality and run by the Dutch Refugee Council. According to the interviewee their longstanding support for ex-UAMs means that they seldomly experience problems with this group:

The ex-UAM support centre is the one stop shop where all ex-UAMs go. 400 ex-UAMs currently receive support, 100 of which have no residence permit. [At the support centre] there are legal advisors, and social workers who can determine solutions for each UAM: integration, school, work, or working on a residence permit, or psychological care. By keeping this together it is a place where all these ex-UAMs can go. As a result, we hardly have any problems with ex-UAMs. (NA4)

Nevertheless, this municipality has also found it necessary to have more involvement with UAMs before they turn 18. The municipality realized that there was no structured communication on a case-by-case basis between school, COA, Nidos, social support and youth care and other stakeholders. They felt that this was not in the best interest of the UAMs and, like the two other municipalities, decided to facilitate communication. For this purpose, they have entered into a covenant with all the relevant stakeholders aiming to make individual support plans for each UAM. The interviewee described this covenant and the reasoning behind it as follows:

The aim is that for all UAMs who come to live here we make a plan for them together. All these stakeholders are informed: this UAM is coming to live here, these are his perspectives [...] that you coordinate this with each other so that everyone can use the same method. Because now school says we are doing this with that boy, and Nidos says we are going to do that, COA is doing something else again. And then it is a bickering between all those organizations. So we said we want the best for these young people, we want them to be able to get the best support they need by sitting around the table and discussing who do we have here? What can we do for him? How can we best support him, and how can we as organizations ensure that things go well? (NA4)

What becomes clear from these interviews is that presence of UAMs and ex-UAMs in a municipality largely determines whether a municipality will develop policy and services for this target group. Whether municipalities only target their services towards UAMs with a residence permit or also target UAMs without a residence permit also depends on whether or not there is a COA location and/or Nidos housing in the municipality. Since the spread of UAMs throughout the country is uneven, it is the municipalities where UAMs are most concentrated that seem to pay the most attention to integration services for unaccompanied minors and young adults.

The above examples give the impression that municipalities tend to focus their attention on facilitating communication between the different stakeholders involved in integration services for UAMs. The challenge encountered by all interviewed municipalities is that there is no official municipal budget for this target group because municipalities have no formal responsibility for

UAMs. The interviewed municipalities solve this by creatively making use of different budgets earmarked for related purposes.

Challenges and gaps in the current integration system

As explained in deliverable 1, UAMs are not subject to the general integration system. As minors, it is expected that integration takes place through school, guardianship and mentor support at their accommodation. Ideally, UAMs learn Dutch in an International Transition Class (ISK) and subsequently transfer to regular education, after which they can enter the job market with a valid diploma. UAMs who do not manage to sufficiently master the Dutch language to be able to attend regular education end up in the general integration system when they turn 18. This means they have to attend a civic integration course and receive integration support.³¹

The interviews with stakeholders indicate that there is an existing gap for UAMs who are not able to successfully complete the ISK and are also unable to pass the civic integration course. This is especially the case for UAMs that have received little education before coming to the Netherlands. As two municipalities describe it:

Their starting position in education is not favourable. Sometimes they are illiterate. Much more often they are alphabetized differently. This means in the non-Latin alphabet. For example, Arabic or Tigrinya. In these cases it takes extra effort to learn the Dutch language. It is a challenge for schools to offer a suitable offer. Eritrean youngsters have on average only attended four years of education. After the International transition class (ISK), students go to regular education. For a number of UAMs the transition is not successful, so they cannot start in regular education. (NA1)

You see the difference with Syrian refugees who have enjoyed primary education. With UAMs from Eritrea that is very different. Many low-literate and illiterate people. They simply cannot manage to alphabetize and learn a new language within 2 or 3 years. We see a large group that drop out between ISK and entrance level [regular education]. So then when they are 18 they are obligated to integrate. But they will never be able to pass the integration exam. So you end up with inactive uneducated youngsters. (NA3)

Municipalities hope that the new integration system which enters into force in 2022 will address this issue. In this new system there will not be one form of integration for every adult asylum seeker, but different routes that can be taken depending on background and capabilities. In the meantime, one municipality is creating its own pilots to prevent UAMs from becoming uneducated and unemployable:

We are setting up pilots to get them into apprenticeships. Creating a new integration route for this group, especially the illiterate. To get them to learn the language in practice, instead of in a school setting, which is obviously not working. That is really a gap that there is no official integration route for this group. Making us have to be creative with pilots. [NA3]

The interviewees do believe that for most UAMs, integration does work, and they are able to attend vocational education and get a diploma. It is the problematic cases, the group that drops out of education that creates the most work for municipalities.

³¹ More background on the integration system and its challenges has been included in section 2.4 of deliverable 1.

Further challenges encountered by stakeholders

The challenges encountered by stakeholders mostly relate to ex-UAMs. Since UAMs live in a protective environment with a mentor supporting them municipalities do not notice problems until they turn 18. According to the interviewed municipalities ex-UAMs may experience homelessness, debt, and trauma related psychological problems. UAMs can be victims of trafficking, but there is a good support system for this in the Netherlands. Radicalization or crime does not seem to be a common issue. The majority of the stakeholders indicated they had not come across LGBTQI vulnerabilities among (ex-)UAMs. However, one municipality stated this was an existing issue, especially among ex-UAMs who have not dared to share their sexual or gender identity while they were minors.

More details on challenges among UAMs is included in the section below based on the interviews with mentors.

4.2.2 Professionals' assessment of integration services

Semi- structured interviews using a topic list were conducted with 5 professionals working in different SILs (P1-5). These professionals all had a similar role, but gave different names for the title of their jobs: youth coach, mentor, or counsellor. Here the term mentor will be used for all professionals. The mentors all work in SILs contracted by Nidos. This means the UAMs living in these SILs have all completed the asylum procedure and have been granted a residence permit.

Capacities of the professionals

The interviewed professionals all have an educational background in social work or youth care. The level of education differs between higher vocational education and secondary vocational education. Two of the respondents mention that people with a secondary vocational education diploma are usually hired as mentor in SILs because professionals with this lower level of education are less costly, but at the same time more streetwise. All mentors indicated that they received specific training to work with UAMs. This included training on: intercultural communication; trauma healing; dealing with aggression; stress reduction; recognizing trafficking. Most of the mentors have been working with this target group since 2015, one mentor since 2008.

The mentors seem to possess the necessary capacities to work with this target group. At the same time the cultural composition of the target group is always changing which means the mentors have to constantly adapt their knowledge and skills of working with different cultures. Currently the UAM population in the SILs consists mostly of young people from Eritrea, Syria and Afghanistan. The interviews with the mentors indicated that working with Eritrean UAMs provided more of a challenge than working with UAMs from the middle east.

Role of professionals in SILs

The mentors describe their role regarding integration of UAMs in similar ways. On the one hand their task is to support the minors in their daily life and on the other hand they have to coach them towards independence and stimulate integration. One mentor describes it as such:

My role is that I am present, that the minors can trust me and find me if they have questions or want to share experiences. Like a surrogate parent. My official task is to make them self-sufficient and make them participate in Dutch society. (P2)

The professionals seem to take their role very seriously. All of them express the importance of gaining the trust of the minor and learning about their personal goals. This building of trust and creating a safe environment is the foundation of everything else they do. In their daily mentoring of the minors the professionals provide various forms of assistance with: school or homework, finding a part-time job, learning how to respond to emails, building a personal network, arranging sports or music lessons, organising access to healthcare, and establishing contacts with the social assistance benefits agency. The respondents create the impression that they get a lot of freedom in how they support the minors and that the exact support they provide depends on the needs of each minor and their own mentoring style.

Expected needs of the UAMs

All the interviewed mentors regarded UAMs both as autonomous and independent. Autonomous because of what they have experienced as a refugee and dependent because they are unaware of how to arrange everything in the Netherlands. The mentors also mention that the UAMs are still children of which a lot is expected and who show much resilience. One mentor formulated it as such:

On the one hand they can be very independent because they have already experienced so much. On the other hand, you notice they have missed a piece in their development, and they can also act as a real child. (P3)

The level of dependence and the needs of the UAMs also seems to differ according to their background. Here, again, a difference was noted between UAMs from Syria and UAMs from Eritrea. Syrian UAMs often come from cities and have had decent education. Eritrean refugees often come from rural areas and have had very little prior education. In the mentor's experience this means the Syrian UAMs learn Dutch quicker and have less trouble integrating in Dutch society, while Eritrean UAMs need more time and support to learn the language and integrate. The family background of the UAM may also influence their needs and level of dependence. A mentor explained this diversity and how he gauges independence:

The level of dependence is very diverse. Working with UAMs for 5 years I can now quickly assess their independence: Family complete? Good sign. Family from a city? Another good sign. Documents complete? Good sign because it means their family is well organised. If they are from a village and have trouble learning the language, I know they will remain dependent for a long time. (P4)

Accommodation options

According to the interviewed professionals' different types of accommodation are available for UAMs. Minors below the age of 15 usually end up with a host family. Most UAMs 15-18 with a residence permit end up in supported independent living (SIL) unless they remain with the host family that they were already living with. The mentors work in three types of SILs:

1. KWE (kleinschalige wooneenheid / small scale residence) housing 4-5 minors with a mentor present during the day before and after school but not on the weekend. The mentor can be reached 24/7 via an emergency number.
2. KWE+ (small scale residence +) housing 4-8 minors with a mentor present throughout the day 7am- 11pm, also on the weekend.
3. KWG (kleinschalige woongroep / small scale group residence) housing 9-12 minors with 24/7 support from a mentor.

Where a UAM ends up depends on how much independence they can handle. In practice that means that UAMs younger than 17 usually end up in a KWG residence and transfer to a KWE+ or KWE once they gain more independence. In a KWE residence UAMs from a similar culture

are usually placed together. Professionals indicate that they prefer the work in a KWE residence because the smaller group provides the opportunity for a better connection with the minors. Working in a KWG residence can be more stressful because there is more unrest and the minors need more support.

The interviews reflect the differences between municipalities concerning the number and types of SILs. The KWE+ type residence seems to be the least prevalent, possibly only available in one municipality. Two mentors did describe two other housing experiments that they were involved in. One mentor spent several years co-habiting with UAMs:

I lived in a house together with the UAMs. You are much closer, it is like a family method. You can give UAMs everything to become self-reliant, but your most important tool is your stability, your presence. [The UAMs living there said] It is the first time that I have felt at home somewhere since I came to the Netherlands. (P4)

Although UAMs responded positively to this type of SIL it was discontinued because it was too intensive for the mentors. Another experiment described by a mentor was a KWE residence with Dutch university students co-habiting:

The Dutch students that live there chose to be part of this project. They take the UAMs along to their football club, teach them about Dutch customs and society. The Dutch language is learned faster [by the UAMs]. (P3)

This mentor explained that this setup changed her role. She has to help a lot less with practical arrangements because the Dutch students help the UAMs. However, because the Dutch students are not social professionals, she has to monitor the interactions and possible psychosocial problems more closely. This creates some challenges, but mostly there are more opportunities for integration.

Education for UAMs

All professionals indicate that the UAMs they support attend secondary school at an ISK (internationale schakelklas / international transition class). After completing the ISK UAMs continue with entrance level secondary vocational education if their language proficiency is sufficient. If their language proficiency is not sufficient UAMs attend civic integration classes after leaving the ISK. Most mentors are positive about the school system for UAMs, especially the ISK. One mentor explains:

School is well organized. The ISK looks at what level they are capable of and gives advice on which level of continuing education is appropriate. Enrolment in continuing education happens with support of the teachers from ISK. (P5)

Here the mentors also note a difference between Syrian UAMs and Eritrean UAMs. Most Syrians attend secondary vocational education after the ISK because they have learned the language relatively quickly. Eritreans often have to follow civic integration classes first to better master the language. The mentors attribute this to the better education Syrian UAMs received before coming to the Netherlands and the fact that they often already speak English.

Experienced challenges and gaps

The interviewed mentors identified several gaps and challenges concerning the integration services available for UAMs. These are challenges that occur while the UAMs live in a SIL and challenges in the period immediately after they leave the SIL when they turn 18.

One gap is the **limited number of hours of support** that the mentors can provide. This means a lot of independence is asked of the UAMs from a relatively young age. As one mentor explains it:

We can provide 6 hours of guidance per UAM. If they are 15 that is very little. We expect a lot from these young people for a 15-year-old. Get up, go to school by yourself, buy and cook your own food. If we would spend a little more money on these young people, we could get them on track better. (P3)

Another challenge is the **stress caused by family reunification procedures**. These procedures can take long which creates a lot of insecurity for the UAMs. In addition, the family back home can put pressure on the UAM concerning the family reunification. One mentor said he always gets directly in touch with the parents of the UAM if there are issues about family reunification, but that not many mentors take this step. According to the mentors, stress about family reunification can negatively affect school attendance and motivation to integrate. Another possible barrier to integration mentioned by the professionals is the compulsory co-habitation after a successful family reunification.

All interviewed mentors assist UAMs in finding a parttime job. Due to COVID it has been more difficult for UAMs to find a job in the past year. UAMs tend to work in the catering industry, which has seen a lot of cutbacks due to lockdowns. One mentor explains that the **type of jobs that UAMS usually end up in are not very conducive to their integration**:

UAMs usually end up in a washing-up kitchen. They are not easily hired for jobs where you interact more with others. Where they would learn the language faster as a result and participate a little more in society. It is very demotivating to only be able to work in crap jobs. They deserve better opportunities. (P5)

In her opinion there is a gap in the integration services in this regard. Although mentors help with job applications there is no official trajectory available for UAMs to gain a foothold on the labour market. According to this mentor more investment in creating awareness about UAMs among hiring companies might create better opportunities for UAMs.

Financial problems among UAMs usually do not occur when they are still living in SILs. Nidos provides UAMs with a monthly stipend and according to the mentors this is enough to cover the necessary costs. These costs include food, clothing, selfcare products and necessities for school. Mentor's do mention that UAMs are sometimes pressured by their family to send money home and that this can become a problem if they do not have a part-time job or have a job which offers very little pay. It is only when UAMs become independent after they turn 18 that real financial troubles may start. Mentors explain that they try to prepare the UAMs for this by coaching them on finances, but that it is difficult to teach them to handle future problems that are not yet an issue. As one mentor says:

You try to prepare them a bit for all the mail they will receive from the authorities. That remains difficult. They usually don't get it until they are 18 and it actually happens. So, we try to overcome it with a part-time job. And make sure that they understand what bills to pay, how to fill in forms. (P5)

The main gap identified by the interviewed mentors is the sudden change that takes place **when a minor turn 18. Suddenly they have to do everything independently**. This is especially hard for minors who arrived in the Netherlands when they were 17 years old and have not had much time to integrate. This sudden absence of support can lead to all sorts of problems such as school dropout, debts, untreated psychological issues and even homelessness.

I have two former UAMs who are homeless while they shouldn't have been. Until they are 18, they are completely supported by us and then everything falls away. (P3)

As indicated in the previous section municipalities have started to become aware of this problem in recent years and some have developed ways to ease the transition to independence once UAMs turn 18. The interviewed professionals described different types of support, depending on the municipality they work in. Some municipalities extend the support of the current mentors, other municipalities arrange support through social services. The amount of additional support differs per municipality. As one mentor explains:

The biggest challenge is time. Every UAM wants to achieve something in the end. As mentor you are trying to prepare the UAM for society and at the same time to prepare society for the UAM. And sometimes you need more time for this. It depends on what is arranged in the municipality how much extra time you get. (P4)

4.2.3 The perspective of the unaccompanied minors

Interviews were conducted with three unaccompanied minors and three former unaccompanied minors (UAM 1-6). The interviewees are from the following countries of origin: Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq, Eritrea and Yemen. The three unaccompanied minors were all 17 years old and living in a SIL. One former minor was 18 years old and still living in a SIL, but in the process of finding alternative accommodation. The two other former minors (18 and 19 years old) had already moved out of the SIL that they previously lived in. All six interviewees were contacted through SIL mentors. Use was made of a topic list, and care was taken to make the UAMs feel comfortable in telling their personal story. Four interviews were conducted in Dutch and two interviews were conducted in English. It is important to keep in mind that the interviewees are what could be called “successful UAMs”: motivated, doing well in school and thinking about their future. It must be understood that UAMs or former UAMs who are not doing well would not readily agree to an interview. This is also something that was confirmed by the mentors that arranged the contacts with the (ex-)UAMs.

Education

All interviewees are in school. The three former UAMs and one of the UAMs are following different courses in secondary vocational education (financial administration, health & welfare, service & care). After attending the international transition class (ISK) their Dutch language skills were sufficient to be able to attend general education. Two of the UAMs are attending the international transition class.

In general, the interviewees were positive about school, both the secondary vocational education and the ISK. The main challenge seems to be the Dutch language, but there is much motivation to invest in their future. As one UAM describes:

School is fine. I'm in an International Transition Class. We only get Dutch and Arithmetic at the moment. I find the arithmetic very difficult. Hearing the Dutch language all day is good for my language skills and I notice that I learn a lot from it. I also have friends at school and love to learn. (UAM1)

One former UAM explains her experiences with vocational education:

I like school, I want to continue studying. It is important for my future. I like to learn Dutch, Math, Drama and Sports. Sometimes it is difficult because my Dutch is not so good, but I always think: it will be ok, it will be ok. (UAM3)

Another former UAM was critical about the level of secondary vocational education that he is currently following. He indicated that it is too easy for him, but that his language skills are not good enough to be able to attend a more advanced level:

The level is too low, so it is boring for me. The level of Math and English is too easy for me. But my Dutch language skills are too low. I would have liked to start at level 4. I want to continue with the same education, I hope to skip level 3. (UAM5)

One UAM seems to be doing exceptionally well and has been accepted to attend a transition year to be able to continue in higher vocational education (university of applied sciences):

School is going fine. Today I received my report card. Next year, in 2022, I am going to the higher vocational education transition class, and then in 2023 I can start at the university of applied sciences. I love school. (UAM6)

In general, these interviews do not reflect the challenges with education described by other stakeholders above. Instead, these interviewees can be seen as representatives of those UAMs that manage to learn the Dutch language in a relatively short amount of time and are therefore able to follow regular education.

Accommodation

The interviewees that live in SILs are generally satisfied with where they live. The most commonly used descriptive term used is 'nice'. The house and their own room is described as 'nice' and their roommates are described as 'nice'. Most interviewees living in SILs live with other UAMs that are from the same region or country of origin. As one UAM indicates this makes it easier to communicate:

I feel welcome in the Netherlands and am satisfied. I get along with my two roommates. With one of the boys I'm very good friends. He's coming from Syria and we're speaking the same language. The other boy speaks a different language which makes contact a bit more difficult and the contact therefore is more superficial. (UAM1)

One UAM mentions that he finds it difficult that former UAMs who are waiting for family reunification remain in the SIL until their family arrives in the Netherlands. In his experience this mostly concerns Eritrean UAMs, because their family reunification processes seem to take longer. The difference in age can lead to tensions in the house:

They are kept in the same Nidos house until their family gets here, sometimes until they are 19 or 20. I think they should be kept in a different house. They want to drink alcohol and do stuff that is not allowed in the house. It is happening in every single Nidos house. (UAM6)

The two former UAMs that have moved out of a SIL are both living in shared housing with Dutch students. This seems to be a positive experience:

I live in a house with Dutch students. I found this room online. It is nice, good location, a big room for me. My roommates are very nice and friendly. I feel very welcome and that makes me feel grateful. (UAM5)

My roommates are Dutch. They are very nice. Sometimes we have dinner together, relax, chat. (UAM3)

The general impression provided by the interviewees is that they ended up in a good place.

Activities

From the interviews it seems as if many of the activities that were previously available to UAMs have been put on hold because of the corona virus. Four out of the six interviewees mentioned that they used to do sports before corona. One interviewee mentions that there is budget available to buy something for leisure time:

You have special budgets from Nidos for your free time. You have some money every year to buy something for your free time. Like, I bought a guitar. (UAM6)

The interviewees give the impression that they have to find their own ways to fill their free time, and that no specific activities are organised for them. For the most part this does not seem to trouble them. However, one interviewee shares that he dealt with a lot of loneliness in the beginning and thinks there should have been more activities so he would not have felt so alone. As he describes it:

The biggest problem of children or young people coming alone is loneliness. You have to do something that will lessen the loneliness. Mentors must come up with a plan. I was thirteen, I was alone, I was in shock. (UAM4)

In the end it seems to depend on the initiatives of the UAMs themselves how they spend their time outside school.

Employment

Two out of six interviewees have a part-time job. One works in the catering business (take-out food) and one has different freelance assignments for manual labour that he finds via a special app. Two other interviewees lost their job in restaurants because of the corona crisis, and one interviewee has never had a job. Some interviewees indicate that the mentors assist them in finding work: but others find work by themselves. As they describe it:

I organised it all myself. I got a job myself. I did have the luck that my mentor gave me good advice and then I could do it myself. (UAM5)

They helped me to find my first job at the HEMA [department store]. My current job I found myself. (UAM2)

I found my own job, they didn't help me. Right now because of corona I am not working. (UAM4)

The challenges for finding employment described by other stakeholders are not echoed by the (ex-)UAMs.

Support from mentors

The UAMs living in SILs have regular visits from mentors. The former UAMs that live independently both live in a municipality where support from mentors is also arranged for ex-UAMs. All the interviewees give the impression that they are satisfied with the support they receive from their mentors. For example:

I have had very good mentors; they were very helpful and honest. They always listen to me, they always respond when I have questions. (UAM3)

The (ex-)UAMs describe similar types of mentor support, where their mentor is always prepared to help, but also stimulates the (ex-) UAM to try things independently. As one UAM explains:

They try to teach you how to do it, and then the next time you do it alone. Like the first time I had an appointment at the hospital, he came with me and we did everything together. The next

time he asked me, can you go alone or do you want me to go with you? I said, I am fine I can do it alone. (UAM6)

From the interviews there seems to be a difference in how much mentors assist UAMs in planning their future and choosing continuing education. As one UAM explained her mentor helps her with everything, including choosing a school:

The mentors are nice, they help me with important stuff. They helped me with the family reunification. If I have difficult school assignments, they also help me. They helped me choose my current school. (UAM2)

Another UAM has had the experience that mentors are helpful, but that he had to make a plan for his future and his education himself:

You're young, you don't have family, so it is difficult. The mentors are doing their best they are doing well. But when you are young, your entire future is ahead of you. Parents tell you what to do and what not to do and that's how it normally goes. They do that all day long because you are young. Mentors help you, that's very good. But they cannot plan your entire future for you. You have to do it yourself. (UAM4)

This last quote illustrates that while mentors offer a lot of what UAMs need on a practical level, it is the continuous support from their own family that UAMs may miss.

Further challenges and gaps

One of the challenges encountered by UAMs is the difficulty in meeting Dutch people. None of the interviewed UAMs living in SILs have contact with Dutch people their own age. All their friends are people from the same country of origin, their housemates, or their classmates. One UAM describes this as follows:

I don't have Dutch friends. I don't know any Dutch person except my mentor and my school teachers. I have a lot of friends from [country of origin]. And I have school friends. It is really difficult to meet Dutch people. I think Dutch people are a little closed, maybe because I don't speak good Dutch. Also, I don't meet them because I don't study with Dutch people, I don't work with them, I only see them on the street. (UAM6)

There are existing programmes for bringing asylum seekers into contact with Dutch people, but because of the corona crisis these may be on hold. One of the former UAMs who lives independently seems to be more successful in having made a Dutch friend because he lives with Dutch students.

Another challenge experienced by some of the interviewed UAMs is the stress caused by insecurities around family reunification procedures. One UAM finds it very frustrating not to have any insight into the progress made in his family reunification procedure;

The government should let you know what is going on about your file. You just have to wait, but you know nothing. Then suddenly you get an appointment with IND and it is yes or no. And then everything changes in one day. (UAM6)

A challenge that is not experienced by the interviewed UAMs, but that does arise as a general impression from these interviews is that the success of a UAM depends largely on themselves. They get support, for some this is sufficient, but there are also UAMs who do not succeed with the same level of support. One interviewed UAM seemed to be very aware of this:

For me it did not go in the wrong direction. I work, I go to school, I do my best. But I also know young people who have been here for five years and who are deep in shit. No income, no sleep,

no going outside. If these young people are helped, that is good for their future. But that's also good for everyone, then they don't need any extra help. Those young people have been through a lot, then your head is full. You stay at home; you don't go to school. But no diploma affects your entire life. This is a very important phase in our lives. (UAM4)

This underlines the idea that the current integration services, also those for UAMs, are working with a one size fits all approach, while different UAMs with different backgrounds and different capacities need different types and levels of support to be able to succeed in Dutch society.

5 Conclusions

The Netherlands have developed and apply a friendly and efficient model of reception and integration of Unaccompanied Minors in the country. A series of state and non-governmental organizations, with the supervisory and prominent role of Nidos and COA, collaborate with local (municipalities) and state authorities for the provision of a broad aspect of services, in respect not only to international and EU regulations, but also to national legislative framework. Services, from the provision of legal assistance, aid to guardianship and mentor support, to accommodation/inclusion to housing services, integration to the educational system and granting of some opportunities for vocational training, are being provided. UAM, according to their age, their national origin and their educational background, are automatically entitled housing and guardianship, with the perspective of their future integration in the Dutch society. Special provisions apply for their inclusion in the regular educational system, according to their master of Dutch language.

The overall system in the Netherlands aims at keeping UAM as autonomous and independent personalities, despite they are allocated to families of the same nationality, if available, and guardians/ mentors, who work as their “protectors” and instructors, in relations to the opportunities provided in the country. The means for their inclusion and integration are provided, the stakeholders, within their limited course, are keen to support the beneficiaries’ integration in the country. The beneficiaries’ future course depends on how much independence they can handle, their personality and their willingness to integrate in the social, and successively educational and labour, context.

Despite the coordinated role and interventions of all the engaged actors and the provided facilitations, the system is dealing with a number of gaps and obstacles. Most prominently, the limited hours of the mentors’ provided support, the types of jobs that are provided to UAMs with the lack of responsibilities due to their status, the unclear engagement of actors according to the beneficiaries’ age, national or educational background, lack of expertised educative personnel, the beneficiaries’ psychological status, the reluctance of employers to employ UAM, the difficulties to enter the secondary vocational system, are only some of the issues that have to be dealt with.

Despite the Netherlands is an open society and the state and non-state stakeholders are collaborating for the provision of the best possible services and assistance to the beneficiaries, factors that are depicted in the degree of beneficiaries’ satisfaction, there are a lot of steps to be adhered. Improved connection between education system- labour market, further engagement of local society, especially in the terms of social mingling and offers of jobs, and better understanding and prioritisation of the beneficiaries’ capabilities, deficiencies and background are only some of the policy areas that need to be improved. Following the sensitive age of UAM, along with the psychological issues, there must be more attention and emphasis on the extraction of their knowledge and abilities, as they live in a foreign environment, more strategically planned and with more targeted interventions.

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Legislation

1. Aliens Law
2. Dutch Civil Code
3. Law of 30 May 1968 houdende vaststelling Leerplichtwet
4. Regulation on benefits for asylum seekers and other categories of foreigners
5. UN Convention of the Rights of the Child

Websites

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2. Nidos.nl (National guardianship institution for unaccompanied and separated children)
3. asylumineurope.org/ (AIDA: Asylum Information Database & ECRE: European Council on Refugees and Exiles)



7 ANNEX

Consent form for participation in the interviews

METAdrasi- Action for Migration and Development (Greece) the Co-ordinator, Fundació Privada Idea per a la millora social d'infants i famílies (Spain), APOSTOLI (Greece), Centre for European Constitutional Law (Greece), Plan International Deutschland EV (Germany), Athens Lifelong Learning Institute (Greece) and Stichting Nidos (Netherlands), implement the project entitled 'Promoting Supported Independent Living as an alternative care practice for unaccompanied minors' (AMIF-2018-AG-INTE-4), which is co-funded by the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund of the European Commission. The project consists of a number of activities that ultimately aim at promoting supported independent living (SIL) as an alternative care practice for unaccompanied minors, focused on minors aged 15-18 in four European countries. Specifically, knowledge and good practices regarding SIL will be collected, exchanged and disseminated. In addition, the project will develop methodologies in order to improve the living standards of unaccompanied minors aged 15- 18 years old.

In this interview we are going to ask your opinion based on your knowledge, expertise and experience about the analysis and assessment of the integration context.

For your participation in the discussion, you should be informed that:

- All appropriate rules of ethical research will be followed during the data collection and analysis.
- Discussion is anticipated to last approximately 50-60 minutes and for practical reasons minutes will be taken. The file will be accessed only by the researchers present today and then will be erased.
- Excerpts from the discussion may be integrated to the final report, but under no circumstances will your name or any identifying characteristics be included in the research findings.
- Opinions expressed during the discussion will not be discussed further with third persons.
- Your participation is entirely voluntary, and does not imply any individual benefit for the participants (financial or other).
- You are free to refuse to answer any question and to withdraw at any time.

Should you have any question, please do not hesitate to ask us.

Having knowledge of the above-mentioned conditions, you are free to decide whether you will take part or not.

Would you like to participate in the discussion?

1. Yes

2. No

Participant's Name

Researcher's Name

Date

.....

.....

.....

Semi-structured Interview Guide for National and Local Authorities/NGOs

Questions are only to guide the discussion. It is not expected/required to answer all.

A. Basic information about the Interviewee

1. name, capacity, organization
2. What is the field of work of your organization/institution?
3. What is your role in the organization? And if not clear, justify your relation with the group of unaccompanied minors.
4. Are you collaborating with other services related to minors and their integration? (Elaborate if public authorities, educational providers, NGOs)

B. Questions for authorities/NGOs

Assessing integration

Factors affecting integration

1. In what extent do inflows affect the effectiveness of the provided integration services for unaccompanied minors?
2. Does the waiting time affect the integration prospects of unaccompanied minors? In what extent concerning employment, education, language acquisition, social assistance or access to healthcare?
3. Do you use any integration indicators in your work to assess the integration of young asylum seekers or/and protection status holders? Which ones?

Specific categories

1. Education & VET
4. What happens to the target group (15-18-year-old) protection status holders and asylum seekers from countries of origin with a high probability of being granted a right to stay at arrival? How are they usually included in the education system? Elaborate for children having completed as well as not completed compulsory schooling in their home country; children who want to study as well as those who want to work.
5. What have been the main challenges of integrating the target group (15-18-year-old) in secondary, vocational and tertiary education, including e.g. long periods of not attending school, negative education experiences in transit countries? What could be promising practices?
6. What have been the main obstacles in recognising diplomas and previous school performance? Are there any good practices? Is there any evidence on the number

of young refugee and asylum seekers who asked for recognition of a secondary or tertiary education diploma obtained abroad? And how many got it recognised?

7. Funding: Have additional resources been made available?
8. Do you use any indicators in your work to assess the integration of young asylum seekers or/and protection status holders in the education system, e.g. drop-out rates?

2. Employment

9. Are there any support programs provided so as to facilitate access to the labour market?
10. What are the main challenges minors face when it comes to employment?
11. Are you aware of any statistics related to minors' employment?
12. Considering the links between housing and employment (e.g. employment being a requirement in practice for renting an apartment and having a permanent address being a requirement for getting employed), how have situations best been resolved in situations when migrants neither had employment nor a place to stay?
13. Are there any provisions for the unaccompanied minors turning 18? Are there any other promising practices for integration into the labour market upon graduation/completion of training? (SILs?)

3. Housing

14. What are the main housing related challenges for asylum seeking members of the target group (15-18 year old asylum seekers from countries of origin with a high probability of being granted a right to stay)? And for protection status holders within the target group?
15. What happens to asylum seekers when they are granted international protection, do they move to other accommodations? Which ones? Have housing gaps arisen at different steps in the course of asylum procedures (e.g., transition from asylum applicant to refugee or pending renewal of permits)?
16. How do the rules and practices for accommodating 15-18-year-old members of the target group differ from those concerning adults? Are decisions concerning housing made by staff dealing exclusively with/specialised in children? Which factors are considered for choosing the type of accommodation arrangement?

Probe: different arrangements, e.g., sharing with other unaccompanied children, sharing with local population, other

Probe also: consideration of conflicts between countries of origin, consideration of reasons for leaving country of origin

17. Are public child protection services involved when decisions on housing concerning 15-18-year-olds are taken? How effectively has this worked in practice

since January 2015? What have been the main difficulties in ensuring dignified living for asylum seekers, e.g. hygiene, privacy, overcrowding, isolation?

18. Which measures are in place supporting transition from (first) reception centre to individual housing solution, e.g. counselling and support by reception centre staff, social housing contingents?
19. Have there been cases of homelessness upon granting of protection status? Have they increased since January 2015? If so, was this a result of a change in practice, e.g. withdrawal of support as status of asylum seeker ended?
20. What have been the main challenges and possibly good practices in relation to housing conditions for unaccompanied children (15-18-year-olds) at first arrival, later on and when they are granted international protection?
21. Which housing solutions have worked best in terms of facilitating integration in general?
22. In which situations do members of the target group who are allowed to work most frequently need to resort to social assistance? For how long on average?

4. Health

23. What kind of health care and social assistance is available to the target group in case of illness or disability? How does this compare to the support available to nationals?
24. What kind of support is available to the target group in case of birth/children? Does this support depend on the type of permit? How does this compare to the support available to nationals?

5. Risk situations

25. Given the marginalised and precarious situation of some members of the target group, together with other factors, do you think that some of them are at risk of becoming radicalised? Have you any evidence of this happening and what do you think are the main causes? Are any members of the target group particularly at risk – such as young men or certain nationalities?
26. Do some of the risk factors increase the chance of the research's target group becoming victims of crime (such as being vulnerable to theft, or being a victim of hate crime). For example, because of their precarious living arrangements or absence of a support network/family? Have you any evidence of this happening and what do you think are the main reasons for people being victimised? Are any members of the target group particularly affected – such as young women or certain nationalities?

27. Gender: Have female asylum seekers and protection status holders (15-18-year olds) tended to be particularly affected as victims by specific types of crime, including: trafficking in human beings for sexual/other exploitation, domestic violence, female genital mutilation, rape/sexual assault, etc.? What evidence do you have for this?
28. Gender: Could you please elaborate on the vulnerabilities of LGBTQI+ asylum seekers? Is there any added vulnerability in reception centres? Have there been incidents of violence or assault? In what extent there are tied to accommodation?

Semi-structured Interview Guide for professionals working in shelters and SILs

This questionnaire applies the report on the assessment of the integration services.

[Before starting the interview, the interviewer should briefly explain the project, and clarify that the person interviewed will be anonymous and the material confidential. They should also hand out the informed consent form: one copy for the interviewer and one for the interviewee. When translating the questions, this can be adapted to the national context. It is also important to be aware that this is not a closed list of questions, but rather “triggers” to start discussing the topics. Finally, note that the headings in bold are not to be asked as questions but intended as internal guiding themes.]

A. Basic information about the Interviewee

1. name, capacity, organization
2. Which is your educational background?
3. For how long have you been working with unaccompanied minors? What is the field of work of your organization/institution?
4. What is your role in the organization? Are they clearly specified? and if not clear, justify your relation with the group of unaccompanied minors.
5. Did you get training in working with this group? If yes from where? Was it enough?
6. Are you collaborating with other services related to minors and their integration? (Elaborate if public authorities, educational providers, NGOs)

B. Research Questions

1. How do social workers perceive unaccompanied minors and their needs?
2. What are the roles of Social workers working with unaccompanied minors? What are the types of services provided to UAMs?
3. What challenges do social workers come across in their work with unaccompanied minors?

C. Questions for professionals

1. Do you think UAMs are dependent or autonomous? How so? What are their needs?
2. How were the conditions for these children before they became in contact with you?
3. What about the competent authorities? Is there collaboration? To what extent? Could these relations develop further?
4. What are the existing services offered to unaccompanied minors upon their arrival?
5. Do you think that the services are sufficient to cover the issues faced?
6. What is the level of preparedness of the service providers and the public authorities?
7. Could you please elaborate on the specific gaps and challenges you encountered regarding the integration of UAMs? (personnel, material, funding)
8. What would you suggest to change in the integration process of UAMs?
9. In your experience what are the main challenges faced by your organization regarding integration of UAMs? What are the leading causes of these challenges? How critical are they? Is funding one of them?
10. What measures have been taken to solve these challenges? Are they working?
11. Do unaccompanied minors have certain expectations with regards to services they get? Do you think they are satisfied?
12. What type of programs exist regarding education, employment and housing?
13. What are the housing options for unaccompanied minors and in what extent can the professions working in the field assist towards their integration?
14. What are the advantages and disadvantages of the different housing options? (elaborate on the different types, shelter, camps (safe zones), SILs etc.)
15. Is there anything else you would like to add regarding this subject?

Semi-structured Interview Guide for UAMs and grown-ups

This questionnaire applies the report on the assessment of the integration services.

Comments for the interviewer:

Prior to the interview it is advisable that the professional working with the minor has a meeting to share the information regarding the project/aims of the questionnaire. This will help the child to get prepared and answer the questions.

In general, it could be helpful if the questions were open-ended. Therefore, if the child is not very talkative, maybe it would help to presented examples, as potential answers.

A. Basic information about the Interviewee

1. What is your name and how old are you?

2. What about your educational background? Have you attended school? For how long?
3. Do you like school? What was difficult about it? And what is your favourite subject?

B. Assessment of services

4. How long have been in the country?
5. Can you please describe your daily schedule? What do you do in the morning? Are you going to school/work/university? And what about the rest of the day? Is this the same for the weekends?
6. Do you think it is a long or easy path?
7. How long have been staying at this accommodation? Or where do you currently live?
8. In what kind of activities offered by the service are you involved?
9. How do you feel about continuing to stay here? Is accommodation adapted to your needs? Do you feel welcome in the accommodation facility? By your roommates? By the staff? In School?
10. Do you think that the personnel working here can help you with homework and generally support you?
11. Have you encountered any form of discrimination in the place of accommodation?
12. Are you attending school/VET/Uni/work? Are you participating in other activities? What about language courses, and what about livelihood (career guidance, cv writing search for work etc)?
13. Do you receive any advice regarding your entering into education and labour market?
14. Do you have frequent contact with your peers? (peer integration is important for integration)
15. Do you think that the integration services are adequate for your future development? Yes, no, and why? What goals do you want to achieve, before leaving the accommodation facility? How would it be possible to do so?
16. Is there something that you believe would help you achieve your goals, but never had the opportunity to do/never had access to?
17. How do you imagine yourself in three years? (eg socially, professionally)
18. Do you believe that the services are structured to take into consideration your needs and expectations?
19. What do you think you will gain from this program? (or what skills) / what did you gain/learn while living in SIL?
20. Do you think that, after leaving the accommodation facility, you will feel empowered enough to live alone, manage your daily tasks, etc?

21. What do you think should be improved regarding the services and integration process?