

Chapter Fourteen

Project Findings

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Common Points between the Project Countries

In all partner countries, the analysis of the literature makes it noticeably clear that unaccompanied minors are Youth on the Move. They are a particularly 'transnational' group, as they have often been on the run for a long time, are away from family and traditional ties, have often travelled through various countries, worked, and suffered there and are often not sure about their future in the countries of their present residence.

In some countries with less economic opportunity, they mostly seek to move on towards the northern countries. In the northern countries they are involved in a legal process often ending in deportation or an illegal status or one that does not encourage societal or economic integration.

Young refugees therefore are a very particular group, to be well distinguished from 'migration from Country A to Country B' youth. Unaccompanied minors are on the one hand less formed and supported by their parents and family. Therefore, they need more context, structure, and an alternative 'home,' which means a substantial demand on the host country in effort and resources. Therefore, stabilisation of the situation (health, housing, identity etc.) and orientation about the situation, opportunities and plans are the key challenges for youth as well as for the host societies.

The literature shows that protection from prosecution is a general human right, as is the general protection for minors. Integration into host societies, even those which are more and more aware of themselves as 'migration societies,' however, requires a much more complex

process of mutual negotiation of the terms of acceptance. This process of negotiation requires the host societies to explain themselves, to explain terms of 'inclusion in diversity' and to translate this into concrete regulations of access to education, training, and employment, but also of the terms of societal immersion.

On the side of the youth in all partner countries, this requires reconciling their own resources, influences, expectations and hopes from the families, but also their own aspirations at an age in which forming an identity is a challenge for any youth. Any model of intervention must therefore emphasise provisions to support the stabilisation and orientation of refugee youth. The design of measures for the training of youth needs to consider this as the main paradigm.

Similarly, the design of the system must be centred on this and an intervention on project or measure level must identify the gaps of current youth training, systems of education and training and the training of professionals which currently prevent a smooth transition.

Mainstream of Current Reform

Efforts are underway in all partner countries to better coordinate all relevant actors. Step by step, systems are overcoming the 'crisis mode' of the years of the large surge in migration. In some countries, such as Germany, the number of new arrivals of minors is small, while Italy and Greece are sealed off from new immigrants, even if the methods of exclusion are more than controversial.

In all the partner countries on conceptual level, but also more and more in practice, the actors are working to integrate social work, education, and training. There is a high level of insight that social work alone is not enough, that youth must be educated, trained, and integrated into work. On the one hand this is a consequence of the insight that these youths will stay in high numbers and not return to their 'home' countries soon. If they are not to be an alienated part of the host societies on a permanent basis, a way must be found to educate, train, and insert them into the general system of education and training. This is a huge challenge in all countries for several reasons. The national reports mention great heterogeneity of educational prerequisites, individual aspirations, language skills, cultural background. Also, most of the youth at arrival are at an age at which the youth of the host country mostly finalise their educational career while refugee youth are about to begin it.

Therefore, a serious effort to include these youths requires a major reform of the educational, social support, training, and insertion systems in all partner countries. Basically, all countries are more and more transforming to ‘migration countries’ in general. They must adapt their systems to this fact in the sense of making their overall systems diversity friendly. At the very least all the countries must face the challenge to develop complementary systems for the group of the young refugees from individual measure/project level to the system level.

The Role of Schools

Schools must be the focal point of such efforts. As schools, due to universal obligatory school attendance for children, are a universal contact point to state and societal organisations, they can potentially be a hub for such holistic approaches or at least be an important part of them. While the reports from all the partner countries indicate the factual importance of what schools do or not do, a conscious adoption of such a role is reported only in some best practices. Being able to play such a role presupposes the insight into the desirability and necessity of such a role as well as the willingness to develop a matching role profile.

Schools traditionally are only responsible for learners at obligatory school age, while many young refugees are beyond this age. Concerning educational prerequisites and personal development level, however, older youth can profit from school type resources as well. School based vocational training also blurs the line between initial school education and adult learning. Transforming schools into more comprehensive training and learning centres therefore is an important point for development. Teaching, social work and consultancy for transitioning to general training and employment systems are ever more integrated. However, institutional separation is still a fact, as is the separation of training of professionals, professional communities, and professional learning.

For all of this, the insight into the basic concepts of diversity, interculturality and inclusiveness as a mission for schools is necessary. All the partner countries are trying hard to make progress in this area. The literature shows conceptual insights in all partner countries and reports examples of activities in this direction.

NGO and the civil society are a ‘live laboratory’ to develop and test such interventions.

Strong Role of NGOs and Civil Society

In all the partner countries, NGOs play a strong and positive role. While in some countries there is a strong tradition of partly faith-based (e.g., Caritas and other catholic organisations as well as their protestant counterparts) and volunteer engagement in social care, new initiatives add to the traditional ones in all the partner countries.

Partners generally assess that the formal state system would be insufficient to cope with the challenges and that volunteer work prevents the system from collapsing. Many of the initiatives point to innovation that also needs to be adopted by the regular system, such as expanded language learning opportunities, communication and social learning, general social work, and community organisation.

NGO and the civil society in general form an educated community in all partner countries which discusses the current events intensively, educates its members, inspires innovation, and puts pressure on policy makers and institutions to reform.

The factual importance if not indispensability of these organisations gives them substantial leverage to influence policy making. The current challenge for these them is to find a common voice while the organisation of the policy field of social policy in general and refugee support in particular puts them in a situation of competition for economic resources for their work.

Key Information about the CISOTRA Project

- The project partners are from Slovenia, Italy, Greece, Germany, and Turkey.
- The consortium jointly developed and implemented an innovative methodology to foster the social inclusion of unaccompanied minors in transition to early adulthood (through holistic support networks, which facilitate the transition from the youth support and education system to the adult education and employment system).
- The main activities: initial study – applied research on the situation, national seminars, ECTS courses, short training for professionals, workshops for UAMS and young adults, the Model of better social inclusion, Monograph book.
- The project involved around 300 professionals from the area of education, labour market, social care, health, security, 200 UAM and

young migrants, 60 policy officers and decision-makers, and 800 other (different) stakeholders.

Country Specifics Recognised in the Project

Germany

- The overall excellent youth support system in Germany needs to be adapted to the specific needs of UAMS and support to young refugees must be provided also after 18 years of age as a rule, not an exception. Inclusion requires a consistent and specific support system until a stable status of employment and societal immersion is achieved. General adult education needs to be expanded.
- A consistent migration policy needs to be developed, which recognises migration as a fact and overcomes an approach that tries to discourage refugees in general.
- The transition to work-based learning and training must be the priority for the support system for young refugees in contrast to keeping these in a bubble of refugee support in a limbo status of unclear residence status. The opportunities and limitations of the labour market in Germany must be communicated.
- The process of the intercultural transformation of society cannot be left to market forces alone. It must be accompanied by a broad societal reflection of the self-concept of a modern migration society. A comprehensive transcultural opening of all state and societal institutions is required.
- The discussion of traditional gender stereotypes and consistent protection, support and encouragement of women must be the core element of any support system. Traditional perceptions of masculinity must be challenged.

Greece

- Greece is considered as a transit country by both migrants and the authorities. As a result, there is not enough effort to promote social integration in Greek society. The focus of migration policies should be shifted from the provision of temporary shelter to actual social inclusion.
- Policies should support active labour market integration (incl. language lessons, related to training for specific professions, lessons of several skills related to professional life as well as life skills,

and introduction to cultural elements. Municipalities and local stakeholders should create incentives for local businesses to train and hire young refugees.

- Experience of NGOs should be exchanged, e.g., monthly.
- Training addressed to professionals working with UAMS should be strengthened and directed towards self-care and resilience, since the burn-out rate in the sector is remarkably high.
- Policies for minors should encourage contacts with their resident peers in a spirit of mutual intercultural communication and opening as opposed to one-way integration.
- Policies and activities aiming at social inclusion should be flexible to adapt to the specific situation (background, personal characteristics, skills, language biography, country of origin etc.) of each UAM and not treat all of them as a unified group.

Italy

- Italy is the main European gateway for immigration and migration policies that, while being in agreement with the European Union, are often subject to national political decisions based on emotional pressures and political ideology. The development of policies of constant social inclusion for immigrant children is a necessity. Policies should be based on accepting migration, following the law, being able to generate respect for human rights, security, and social inclusion of migrants on equal terms with citizens, including good policies for the protection of the superior interests of children.
- Local policies for the protection of unaccompanied minors are often separated and not coordinated with national policies, creating a fragmented and poorly coordinated system in all its phases.
- Social inclusion must be reworked through facilities for reaching the labour society and the knowledge and attribution of rights that are often considered to be known and applied without verification. This process must be based on a process of intercultural implementation that develops through knowledge and information necessary in the migration society of the globalised world. The training of trainers raises the level of knowledge and the ability to disseminate. Knowledge of the values, traditions and rules of the State is a key step in the recognition of the legal system capa-

ble of transforming migrant children and young refugees in transition into citizens integrated into a process of mutual exchange and cultural evolution.

Slovenia

- Slovenia is considered as a transit country for migrants – most UAMS leave the Slovenian country relatively quickly and follow their path to the countries of Western and Northern Europe.
- The Slovenian partner recommends the application of the general policy recommendations of CISO TRA in Slovenia. Slovenia shall support the development of a high-quality system for the transition of UAMS into adulthood, and safe transitions of UAMS and young refugees within Europe.

Turkey

- The capacity of Child Support Centres for UAMS needs enhancement. A plan on moving towards home arrangements might be useful for both UAMS and refugee children.
- Social and emotional support is another field of UAMS requirements. They need psychosocial support and extracurricular skills development.
- UAMS and professionals working with them need to get more legal advice and knowledge of the mechanisms concerning UAMS' rights. To ensure that UAMS' rights are monitored and protected, a guardian must be assigned by law. Technical knowledge and skills such as the assignment of guardians and curators need enhancement.
- UAMS who are not registered and who are not under state protection are at risk of the worst forms of child labour. Protection and support systems need to be enlarged and enhanced. Awareness-raising programmes regarding risks and relevant legislation in Turkey on early and forced marriages and child labour are required for UAMS.
- The professionals working with UAMS in Turkey need regular training and supervision programmes. Sensitivity and knowledge of the staff that provide monitoring or security services, teachers, health personnel, migration specialists, social workers should be enhanced. Training on various competencies, refugee, child, and

human rights training are important. They also need to acquire the skills to become an advocate for children and to be able to understand their perspectives. Assignment of translators or bilingual staff is also a critical need.

- An important need for support staff emerged as a treatment for psychosocial well-being. Social workers, social services specialists and staff working directly with UAMS suffer from burn-out and depression and they need to acquire skills for self-help and treatment.

CiSoTRA Key Achievements

Most of the project achievements focus on recommendations for professionals to support better social inclusion of UAM in transition to adulthood, with a focus on the needs of UAM and training for professionals that work with them. The main achievements of the project were:

- Comparative initial research on the legal and social situation of young refugees in the partner countries and collection of more than 50 good practices.
- Development of a model of coordination of actors for better social inclusion of migrants in transition to adulthood, <https://CiSoTRA.eu/CiSoTRA-model/>.
- Development of on-line training for professionals (4 ECTS courses and 15 short training units), visit e-platform: <https://elearning.CiSoTRA.eu/>.
- Monograph book, <http://www.toknowpress.net/monographs/978-83-65020-35-2/>.