

## WP 2 Synthesis Report Summary Turkey: Facilitating the Transition of Unaccompanied Minor Refugees to Successful Adulthood – Pathways, Critical Incidents and Building Life Skills Through Multi-Actor Cooperation<sup>[LSEP]</sup>

The topic of young refugees is in all of the countries of Europe and also in the countries of the partners of the CiSoTRA project is a complex one. This report is prepared to contribute to the knowledge about those practices which currently shape the policy field in the partner countries, thereby expanding the knowledge about policy options, identify training needs of professionals and youth and to suggest an overall model of fostering a smooth transition of youth from the status of protected minor to adulthood.

In order to contribute to the international and European level policies, the research implemented by the partners has provided an assessment of the situation in their respective countries. The partners collected information based on an agreed grid of guiding questions which resulted in national reports. In order to make good practices available to an international audience, all partners collected a set of descriptions of good practices of policies and measures for UAM and young unaccompanied adult refugees, as well as practices of training and coordination in the area. The report at hand aims to synthesize the overall conclusions in a comparative perspective.

Regarding migration in general, Slovenia, Italy, Germany, Greece and Turkey each face quite specific challenges. In Slovenia where the quantity of UAM is generally low a main challenge is the phenomenon of UAM who have been registered, but disappear. Italy faces a high number of UAM, the majority of whom are from Africa and a remarkable phenomenon is the mostly long duration of the escape of the youth and histories of mistreatment, exploitation and violence. Germany has accepted a high level of recent intra-EU migration and a surge in refugees since 2015 and one of the key challenges is a high level of uncertainty due to changes in government policy and a greater pressure for immediate deportation of those young adults who are not granted a protected status. Greece is also a transitory country and the capacities of official youth protection are limited. Turkey is challenged by a high volume of refugees fleeing the civil war in Syria, refugees now being 5% of the overall population.

On the whole in all project countries the problem of the harsh break between the youth support and the general system for adult refugees has been affirmed. Most partner countries claim that the (in cases temporary) demand of care for UAM by far exceeds the capacities. In most countries a multitude of institutions are responsible for UAM. Multiple split responsibilities create coordination problems, which are increased during the transition to adulthood. In all cases for UAM the institution of guardianship is central and the training and status of guardians is a key factor of success. In all countries at least some good practices of care in transition are being described, among them care in small, family-like living groups and integration in well designed (vocational) schools are among these. In all countries except Germany the problem of irregular status of minors is a main concern, as this implies putting youth at risk of exploitation and violence. Contradictory interest of the youth themselves, the interest in a good integration and education vs. the pressure to earn

money for the family in home countries and traffickers are reported from all partner countries. In all of the partner countries civil society organisations are involved in the practical care for UAM and young refugees to a very high degree.

Overall the reports by the partners affirm the initial hypotheses of the project.

Common strengths are:

- a high level of engagement by NGOs,
- efforts to fulfil international obligations vs. UAM,
- guardianship and some housing schemes as good practices,
- existence of good practices in many areas which can be upscaled.

Common weaknesses are:

- a lack of cooperation and consistent procedures, [SEP]
- an unstable and partially unproductive political and societal climate, [SEP]
- persistent situations of irregularity, exploitation and child labour in some countries,
- a lack of capacities in most countries,
- weak training level of professionals and employees in institutions as the psychosocial requirements of UAM are new,
- limited capacities for training and professional exchange incl. adoption of good practices through overburdening of the system and individual agents,
- lack of consistent immigration policy leads to contradictory operational policies by individual agencies.

Opportunities mentioned by many partners include

- national and international adoption of good practices,
- better coordination of institutions and cooperation of organisations.

Main risks are

- exploitation, violence and trafficking for irregular youth,
- waste of prior efforts through unproductive policies which aim to reduce the number of migrants instead of integrating them,
- emergence of large groups of socially unintegrated youth without integration in education, employment and training.

All partners were asked to discuss suggestions for improvement for shaping institutional practices and activities by NGOs. From the example of the resource-richer partners, measures of coordination by municipalities, like distinct coordinators for schooling and training and institutions which include youth support responsibilities in education and training, and those for young adults, such as Youth Employment Agencies, are suggested for further study. Also strong civil society organisations can provide overarching services for groups beyond administrative separation of responsibilities and financing structures. Some of the partners discuss in their reports the improvements in the competences of professionals which are needed.

Some common fields of learning are clearly visible:

- Providing psycho-social support, dealing with traumatisation, providing orientation, stabilisation and support
- Mutual learning of professionals from different fields, in particular social-work, education, integration to employment oriented training and employment, security and general civil society integration
- Self-care of professionals to prevent burn-out and maintenance of a professional attitude next to human engagement
- Exchange of international good practices in all of these fields
- Ability to cooperate with actors with different attitude and professional logic in order to contribute constructively to a system which allows for the smooth transition to adulthood and full economic and social integration

The training and development needs of UAM and young adult refugees in partner countries involve:

- Psycho-social resilience training
- Coping with stress and uncertainty, prevention of violence
- Cultural awareness and integration skills
- Ability to self-orient and self-organise (life-projects)
- Knowledge about institutions and legal procedures
- Knowledge about training and education opportunities
- Vocational skills and knowledge about how to get a job as a prerequisite to leading an independent life
- Training of competences for cultural expression
- Fostering social learning through supporting contacts to civil society organisations
- Organising civic and social participation to include the perspectives and needs of youth

In all partner countries the analysis of the literature makes it very clear that unaccompanied minors are Youth on the Move. They are a particularly “transnational” group, as they are often on the escape already for a long time, are away from family and traditional ties, often have 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 to the northern countries. In the northern countries they are involved in a legal process which often will end in deportation or an illegal status or one that does not encourage societal or economic integration. Therefore stabilisation of the situation (health, housing, identity etc) and orientation about the situation, opportunities and plans are the key challenge for youth as well as for the host societies.

In all partner countries systems are currently working for a better coordination of all relevant actors. Schools must be the focal point of such efforts. Because schools, due to universal obligatory school attendance for children, are an universal contact point to state and societal organisations as a whole, they can potentially be a hub for such holistic approaches or at least be an important part of them. 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 also older youth can profit from school type resources. School based vocational training also blurs the line between initial school education and adult learning. Transforming schools into

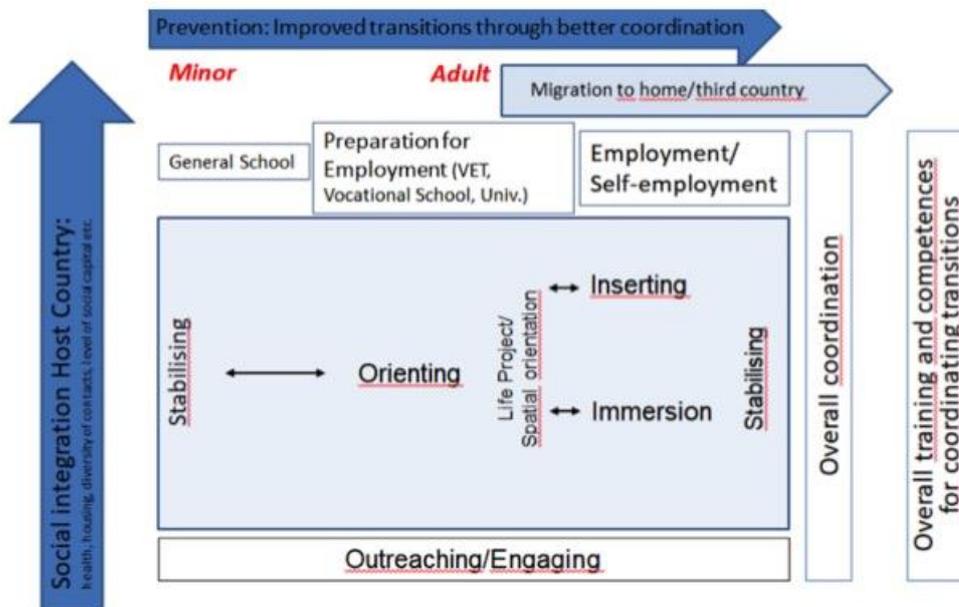
more comprehensive training and learning centres therefore is an important point for development.

In all of 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 as a whole, in all of the partner countries new initiatives add to the traditional ones.

Certainly, there are some particularities regarding each country. In Slovenia the quantitative dimension of the challenge is small. Therefore the country is in the situation of being able to test policy and intervention alternatives on small scale and to thoroughly study the efforts in the larger countries. In Italy the situation is shaped by sharp political controversy about migration policy in general, where the national government aims to limit migration by all means, including legally controversial ones. In Germany the most significant characteristic of the situation is that Germany is undecided about in how far it wants to be a “migration society” and in how far young refugees should be part of this society. In Greece, the huge challenge of a high number of refugee youth, very limited economic means and a dramatic clustering of the youth, puts a high strain on institutions and refugees alike. In Turkey, the efforts focus largely on the Syrian refugee population. For these the implication still is that they will eventually return and only very recently the insight grew that the situation will at least have some duration. For the latter reason now there are efforts to integrate youth into the regular education system.

The Model of Intervention presented in the figure below suggested in accordance with the results of the research involves three lines of intervention: intervention in securing the legal rights of the young refugee, in particular a fully legal determination of the legal status and status of residence, the line of intervention in customized education, training and insertion in education or work and training and intervention in social integration. Adequate legal status is the prerequisite of all other measures and therefore many civil society groups focus their support efforts on making sure that these legal rights of refugees are maintained. Social integration obviously is a prerequisite of effective education and training. In the area of education and training, two main paradigms of reform can be identified: a central role of vocational education and the value of work-based learning. The second common area of reform is a better transition of refugee youth between the various stages of education and training in order to prevent dropout and to provide the pathways of education most appropriate for the need of the individual. For refugees who are mostly unaware of the opportunities of the education system of the host country and lack access to accurate information from family and role models, a key challenge is to orient about expectations, requirements and opportunities. On the level of social integration, there is a wide consensus among the partners about the risk factors for refugee youth to drop out of society permanently out of frustration, denied opportunities, lack of building social relations. From the analysis of the literature, as well as from studying good practices and partner assessment, it has become very clear that the dimension of social integration is regarded by all of these as a very relevant dimension.



Some policy recommendations developed with regard to this model suggested are:

- A clear migration policy to be developed to set a clear and transparent framework.
- Transition strategies must map and consider multiple potential pathways of transition: stay in host country for limited time (migration for work), integration in host country, transition to third country, resettlement of transnational displaced youth, return to >home< country.
- Measures for unaccompanied minors must focus on keeping open all of these pathways and a reflection of all of the options.
- The phenomenon of work migration of third country national youth needs to be dealt with in more constructive ways. Pathways into legal and safe work must be a priority.
- Unaccompanied minors therefore must be educated and trained for very early integration into work or ways of training that also generates some income in order to avoid drop out into illegal work
- Develop vocational schools into hubs of UAM/young adult refugee transition
- Good practices must be exchanged and mainstreamed, backed up by adequate funding, including training and international exchange of staff.
- Transition of minors must be managed on municipal level, using funds from state, federal and municipal sources.
- Support and fund NGOs in the field, professionalise NGOs
- Develop and expand training for professionals: focus on cooperation and coordination competences