

NEWSLETTER



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FORM

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Therapeutic foster care for
unaccompanied minors and
their foster families



GETTING INSPIRED!

invitation: conference "Therapeutic foster care for
unaccompanied minors"

Thursday 28 November Brussels

Odisee
DE CO-HOGESCHOOL



Co-funded by
the European Union

YOU ARE INVITED!

Conference on Therapeutic Foster Care for Unaccompanied Minors

The FORM project, Therapeutic Foster Care for Unaccompanied Minors and Their Foster Families, funded by the Erasmus+ programme, is reaching its conclusion after three years of dedicated international collaboration.

The consortium gathers six partners from Belgium (Odisee University of Applied Sciences, Brussels; Foster care East Flanders, Ghent), Germany (University of Kassel), Italy (Salesiani Per Il Sociale, Rome; and Cyprus (Hope For Children Policy Center, Nicosia) and ENSA European Network for Social Authorities, Veneto.

However, as the challenges facing unaccompanied minors sadly continue, our commitment to open collaboration and joint efforts remains essential.

We are therefore pleased to invite you to the conference “Therapeutic Foster Care for Unaccompanied Minors”—a culmination of the project’s achievements and a launchpad for future initiatives.

FORM has developed a comprehensive model of therapeutic foster care, alongside a specialized training course and policy recommendations, designed to enhance the quality of care for these vulnerable children.

This event is an invaluable opportunity for foster care workers, legal guardians, shelter staff, educators, volunteers, and psychosocial professionals alike. Engage with practical insights, share your experiences, and gain new perspectives that can enhance the quality of care and support for unaccompanied minors.

Together, we can continue to advocate for the well-being of these children and foster a collaborative community dedicated to making a difference.

We look forward to welcoming you to an inspiring day of discussion, learning, and collaboration!

Register now



2. INTERVIEW ON PROJECT LEARNINGS

with: *Katja Fournier researcher Odisee University of Applied Sciences and project coordinator*

Why this project?, what are the challenges you are addressing?

Foster care services (all over Europe) report an enormous need to offer therapeutic – in the broadest sense of this word: ‘healing and development oriented’ - care for UMR youngsters and their foster families.

Why choosing the trend of foster families to welcome UMR?

UMR are often taken care of in the context of buddy projects or residential settings, where they are followed-up on an individual basis by a trustee that acts from a certain distance, or, in the context of a group that is guided by different rotating educators. Foster family care for UMR is a different and more recent trend in guiding this subgroup of ‘looked after youngsters’.

All over Europe, ‘normal’ families are accepting a UMR as a ‘normal’ member of the family. Within this new trend of foster family care for UMR, foster care services are mentioning complexities and problematic situations that require a specialized guidance, taking into account exile-specific influences like the effects of cumulative losses and life-threatening situations, multi-layered crises in identity formation, complex and multiple trauma-related dynamics, and, migration-related factors

This project guided the international consortium to some learnings and recommendations that will be available to effectively support unaccompanied minors seeking asylum among them what key points would you like to stress?

First, a Holistic, Rights-Based Approach is fundamental to supporting unaccompanied minors (UAMs). This approach prioritizes each child’s rights, dignity, and individual needs, aligning with frameworks like the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. Implementing this model on a global and European scale provides comprehensive support through legal protections, individualized care, community integration, and developmental opportunities

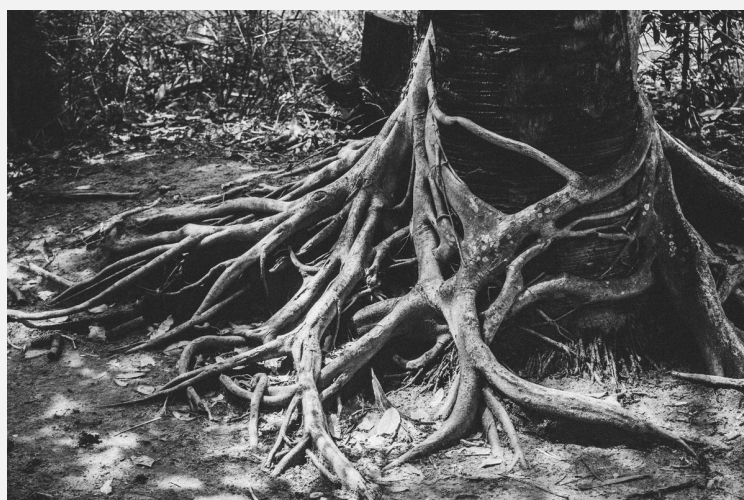


Equally important is Strengthened European Coordination, which is essential to create a cohesive approach across EU countries. By harmonizing procedures and sharing best practices, member states can ensure that UAMs experience consistent care and protection wherever they reside in the EU. This coordination also enables standardized training for professionals, promoting consistent knowledge in child protection, trauma-informed care, and cultural sensitivity.

Moreover, Building Community Support around UAMs plays a vital role in fostering a sense of belonging. By establishing networks that include foster families, social workers, and community volunteers, these minors gain critical social connections and stability. Cultural and language mediation, provided by trained professionals, bridges communication gaps and aids in smoother integration. Community-based programs like mentorship and cultural exchanges further strengthen UAMs' adaptability and confidence.

Finally, Therapeutic and Evidence-Based Care addresses the unique psychological and developmental needs of UAMs, many of whom have faced significant trauma. Research is key to understanding their challenges and tailoring foster care models to provide stability and therapeutic support. Continuous professional development, focused on trauma-informed care and cultural competence, equips caregivers to respond compassionately. Therapeutic foster care that includes psychological support enables UAMs to develop resilience and fosters long-term integration and personal growth.

Incorporating these strategies at national and EU levels can establish a robust foundation for supporting UAMs, empowering them to build safe, fulfilling futures.



3. ON THE SPOTLIGHT: EXPERIMENTAL WORKSHOP HOPE FOR CHILDREN CRC POLICY CENTER

Hope for Children, organized an experiential workshop on Therapeutic Foster Care for Unaccompanied Minors within the framework of the E+ project "FORM" on 10 October 2024 in Nicosia (Cyprus),

The focus has been on providing effective, trauma-informed tools to support foster professionals and minors in care.

This workshop introduced the key concepts of therapeutic foster care, combining an experiential session where participants, including policymakers from the Social Welfare Services and Ministry of Education, engaged in practical activities from the 10-point program outlined in our Practical Guide. By the end of the session, participants gained insights into applying therapeutic techniques in real-world foster care scenarios.



Interested to learn more about the project?

Visit our website at: <https://form.ensa-network.eu/>

Improving Quality of care of vulnerable children

**Available on line after 28 November 2024
model of therapeutic foster care,
specialized training course
policy recommendations**

ID KA220- VET-CCE37B76



HOPE FOR CHILDREN CRC Policy Center Cyprus TPM 14, 15 November 2023

FOCUS EU:

New Pact on Migration and Asylum

new rules managing migration and establishing a common asylum system at EU level, that deliver results while remaining grounded in our European values

FORM objectives will remain on the agenda of ENSA Youth, Minors and Families working groups. Invitation: 27 November 2024, Odisee University Brussels



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