



ACT-PROJECT

IMPROVING ACCESS TO
ALTERNATIVE CARE FOR
UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN
AGED 15-18

NIDCS
guardianship for refugees



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SITUATION REPORT THE NETHERLANDS



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INTRODUCTION

This report is the result of the ACT project. ACT is a cooperation between project partners from Italy, Bulgaria, Spain, coordinated by Nidos in the Netherlands. The ACT project aims to improve the access to and increase the quality of alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied children aged 15-18, through providing actors (interested in) developing alternative care arrangements (different from residential care) in countries of project partners and other member states (MS) with training of their staff (guardians and other practitioners that work in alternative care arrangements). It also aims at improving sustainability of offering alternative care in MS.

A situational analysis has been carried out in every partner country collecting information about the accessibility and quality of alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied children aged 15-18. The results of the analysis in the Netherlands are summarised in this report ranging from information on general context, including the available forms of care, to current good practices, challenges and needs and recommendations. The opinion and advice from the children are crucial and are therefore included in this report.

Access to alternative care, both semi-independent living and family based care, is already ensured in the Dutch reception system. Getting unaccompanied children aged 15-18 into family based care is however still a desire and challenge. Initiatives in the Netherlands regarding access to alternative care therefore mainly focus on this topic.

1 DESCRIPTION OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION AT NATIONAL LEVEL

1.1 General context

As Dutch national guardianship institution, Nidos is responsible for all unaccompanied children in the Netherlands. At the beginning of the nineties, the Dutch Ministry of Justice appointed Nidos, an NGO, as a specialised guardianship institution for unaccompanied children, because a national organisation can function as a point of address and can guarantee continuity in the counselling. Another consideration was that in this way expertise could be developed for such a specific group¹. A special article in the Dutch Civil Code enables Nidos to provide guardianship services to all unaccompanied children.

As for all other child and youth protection agencies and service providers in the Netherlands, the work of Nidos is regulated by the Civil Code and the Youth Care Act. The Civil Code provides Nidos as guardian with parental power. The Youth Care Act provides quality standards, methods and procedures in service provision as well as conditions for the recruitment of professionals, mechanisms for complaint, reporting and supervision. This act is therefore the main regulatory document that provides national standards for guardianship services².

¹ Section 3.8 of the European Network of Guardianship Institution's (ENGI) Report: Towards a Network of European Guardianship Institutions. Page 19.

² Nidos Foundation, Towards a European Network of Guardianship Institutions, 2010, pp. 45, 48. Interview with Nidos, Netherlands, 7 June 2016. Defence for Children International, ECPAT The Netherlands, Guardians Against Child Trafficking and Exploitation, National Report the Netherlands, Extended version, October 2012, pp. 60-61.

1.2 The legal basis for the reception system

Law/Legislation	What it regulates
<p>Letter from the secretary of the ministry of safety and justice to the Dutch house of representatives 15 September 2014, 2013-2014/27062/95 Implemented from 1 January 2016 https://zoek.officielebekendmakingen.nl/kst-27062-95.html</p>	<p>Introduced the new (adjusted) reception model for unaccompanied children and its basic principles:</p> <p>Children up to 14 years of age are hosted in Nidos' reception families. Children from 15 years of age and over who have been granted a status are hosted in small scale reception organised by Nidos or by youth care organisations contracted by Nidos. Children who have to return are hosted in small reception facilities organised by COA (Central Reception Agency).</p> <p>Upon arrival, all children from 15 years of age and over, awaiting their decision on their asylum application, are hosted in process reception centres (POL).</p> <p>The adjusted reception model shortened the time of stay in the process reception centres. Reception for victims of human trafficking remained unchanged.</p>
<p>Youth Care Act (Jeugdwet) of 1 March 2014 https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0034925/2020-01-01 Provides regulations for youth care which also apply to Nidos' care. Contains regulations regarding foster care for Dutch national children which apply to Nidos' family based care.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. An action plan has to be made for every child. In case of family based care, foster parent's consent is required.2. Guardianship institutions must inform foster parents about their right to file a complaint. And their right to contact a counsellor.3. The guardianship institution has to provide the opportunity for client participation of foster parents.4. The law states conditions for becoming foster parents, such as their minimum age, the need for proper matching and screening and a declaration of no objection.6. Foster contract is required, containing the agreements on care for and guidance of the child by the foster parents.7. The guardianship institution is obliged to provide the necessary information to foster parents for the best interests and upbringing of the child. For instance: Information about health.8. The possibility of prolonged family based care after 18.
<p>Youth law regulation (Regeling jeugdwet) of 12 December 2014 https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0036007/2020-01-01</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Provides the definition of a foster child: 'A child who is raised by a foster parent and is part of the family of the foster parent, for whom a foster contract has been concluded'.2. States the monthly allowance for foster parents based on age group.

1.3 Legislation on guardianship for unaccompanied children

According to article 1:245 of the Dutch Civil Code³, minors in the Netherlands shall be under custody. Custody can either be parental authority or guardianship. Parental authority is provided by the parents, exercised jointly or by one of the parents. Guardianship can be exercised by a natural person (not being the parent) or a legal person. In all cases, a declaration of willingness to become guardian is required.

1.3.1 Basis for granting custody to Nidos

Pursuant to article 1:302 paragraph 2 Civil Code, the court may provide custody over a minor by or for whom an asylum application has been submitted and who is living in the Netherlands to Nidos. In addition, Nidos can also be appointed as guardian for other categories of minors. This has been decided for several other categories by the Minister of Justice in 2005⁴.

1.3.2 Provision of guardianship

Nidos requests the court to provide guardianship based on articles 1:253r or 1:253q of the Civil Code, because it is assumed that the parent(s) are (temporarily) not able to exercise authority over the child or because the existence and/or whereabouts of the parent(s) is unknown. A copy of this request is sent to the Dutch Child Care and Protection Board (which also requests for custody for Dutch national children). The Board will provide a declaration of no objection to the court and the court then sends the decision regarding the granting of guardianship to the child, the guardian (Nidos) and the Ministry of Safety and Justice.

1.4 Guardianship in practice

1.4.1 Guardians

Nidos guardians are all professional social workers holding a bachelor's degree in social work from a university of applied science. In order to ensure that the competence of guardians is adequate and up to date, Nidos provides introduction courses to all newly employed guardians and complementary training for all guardians.

1.4.2 Training

All guardians follow an eight-day job training shortly after their employment, which includes the Delta-certified Nidos guardianship methodology the Nidos family based care methodology. The guardian receives a certificate upon successful completion of the training and its concluding assignment.

Complementary trainings offered by Nidos cover a broad spectrum of subjects that are specifically relevant for working with unaccompanied children. They include how to work and communicate with the children while considering their different cultural backgrounds, their family situations as well as the possibility that the children have been exposed to acts of violence, and how to deal with trauma. Guardians are sensitised to the needs of unaccompanied children that might be different from those of national children, including with regard to religion, accommodation and food. An important subject of the trainings relates to the asylum procedure. While each child who applies for asylum has the right

³ <https://wetten.overheid.nl/BWBR0002656/2017-02-28>

⁴ Decision of the Minister of Justice of 12 January 2005 (nr. 5328242/04/DJJ, Staatscourant 17 januari 2005, nr.11/pag. 12): 'Other categories are: A. minors younger than twelve years of age, for whom an asylum application was submitted when Nidos obtained custody of them. B. minors whose mother is under guardianship of Nidos, and for or by whom an application for a (regular) residence permit under the restriction "stay with mother" was submitted. C. minors who are found on Dutch territory and who have become victims of human trafficking and by or for whom a (regular) application for a residence permit under the restriction 'victim of human trafficking' is submitted. D. minors who are found unaccompanied at an airport in the Netherlands and by or for whom a regular application has been or can be submitted. E. minors who are left alone in a COA reception centre after their parents left for an unknown destination. F. minors who have been placed under the supervision of Nidos and whose parent(s) have been released or relieved from the authority or who left for an unknown destination'..

to be assisted by a lawyer, the guardian is tasked to ensure that the lawyer does provide the child with the right support in the process.

1.4.3 Teamwork

Nidos is present all over the Netherlands with regional offices spread through the country. Every office has around 20 guardians, administrative support and one manager. Every team consists of a few small teams called core teams. Guardians receive recurring feedback on their work and actions through their core team, which exists of around 8 guardians who are responsible for ensuring quality of care for the child and supporting each other on case level.

2 PROFILE OF THE CHILDREN, RECEPTION & KEY STAKEHOLDERS

2.1 Profile of the children and reception⁵

2.1.1 Nationality

At the end of 2019 Nidos had responsibility over children from 89 different nationalities (this includes the children under guardianship, family supervision and youngsters aged 18 and over). The most common are:

	2019	2018	2017	2016
Eritrea	790	1288	1436	1733
Syria	646	640	935	1517
Somalia	367	394	447	530
Morocco	286	212	98	72
Afghanistan	225	301	424	706
Iraq	166	152	130	145

The overview shows an increase in the number of children with Moroccan nationality. In addition to the Moroccan children, there is an increase in children from other safe third countries, such as Albania, Algeria and Gambia.

2.1.2 Age

	2019	2018	2017	2016
Total	3484	4198	4583	5860
Till 12 years	15%	14%	10%	10%
12-16 years	25%	24%	25%	25%
16-18 years	60%	62%	65%	65%

2.1.3 Reception

Breakdown per type of reception⁶ on 31 December 2019 in percentages⁷:

	2019	2018	2017	2016
COA⁸				
COA large scale reception (POL ⁹ and	14%	17%	15%	18%
COA small scale reception, incl.				
protected shelter ¹¹	5%	6%	4%	5%
Nidos				
Small scale reception				

⁵ Nidos' 2019 Annual Report.

⁶ See chapter 3 for a description of these types of reception.

⁷ This overview includes children with a migrant or refugee background with parents who are placed under Nidos' care by a judges supervision order.

⁸ Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers.

⁹ Process Reception Centre = first reception after arrival for 15+ years aged children during their asylum procedure. Period of stay is normally around 3 months.

¹⁰ Asylum Seekers Centre = reception for adults after POL, few unaccompanied children live here because of their specific situation

¹¹ Reception for unaccompanied children who are (possible) victims of human trafficking

(KWE & KWG) ¹²	12%	13%	24%	28%
Family based care ¹³	35%	31%	30%	33%
Other				
Parents ¹⁴	10%	12%	11%	5%
Youth care institutions ¹⁵	3%	3%	3%	2%
Other ¹⁶	20%	17%	12%	8%

2.2 Key stakeholders¹⁷

Stakeholder	Responsibilities / Role
Aliens Police	The Aliens Police, Identification and People Trafficking Department (Vreemdelingenpolitie, AVIM) is part of the Dutch national police force and is responsible for monitoring foreign nationals in the Netherlands. It is one of the first parties one meets when applying for asylum for purposes of first identification.
Dutch Council for Refugees	The Dutch Council for Refugees (VluchtelingenWerk Nederland, VWN) is an independent human rights organisation, whose aim is to protect the rights of refugees. The organisation provides information and explains the asylum procedure to the applicant. Its employees inform and support the applicant as they pass through the asylum procedure. It can also help the applicant if there are any problems with other organisations. It works in close cooperation with lawyers.
Immigration- and Naturalisation Service	The Immigration- and Naturalisation Service (Immigratie- en Naturalisatiedienst, IND) is part of the Dutch Ministry of Safety and Justice. It processes and decides on the asylum claim. Its members of staff conduct the interviews with the applicant about their identity, nationality, journey to the Netherlands and the reasons for leaving the country of origin.
Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers	The Central Agency for the Reception of Asylum Seekers (Centraal Orgaan Opvang Asielzoekers, COA) is a non-departmental public body of the central government. Its responsible for the reception and guidance of adult asylum seekers in

¹² KWE = Small Living Unit. KWG = Small Living Group. Organising small scale reception is Nidos' responsibility. Most of small scale reception is managed by youth care organisations contracted by Nidos and some are managed by Nidos' itself.

¹³ This overview takes all children under Nidos' care into account. Of the unaccompanied children in reception under Nidos' responsibility, 47% are living in family based care (Nidos management information system, October 2019).

¹⁴ Former unaccompanied children who have been reunited with their parents for whom guardianship will be transferred back to their parents.

¹⁵ Children who are in need of specialised care such as children with an intellectual disability or children who, by courts order are placed in secured facilities because they are deemed a danger to themselves or others.

¹⁶ This includes children who are living independently, children who went missing and children in detention

¹⁷ Most of the information about stakeholders is taken from the leaflet: Before your asylum procedure begins, The Directorate for Migration Policy of the Ministry of Security and Justice, 2018, https://ind.nl/documents/rvt_engels.pdf, visited on 17 March 2020.

the Netherlands. It provides reception, meals and healthcare insurance for adult asylum seekers. It also provides reception and guidance to unaccompanied children aged 15 and over during their first months in the Netherlands while awaiting the decision on their asylum claim, and to unaccompanied children aged 15 and over whose claim has been rejected.

Healthcare for Asylum Seekers	Healthcare for Asylum Seekers (GezondheidsZorg Asielzoekers, GZA) is the healthcare organisation for asylum seekers. There is a GZA centre at or near every COA reception centre. GZA can arrange an appointment with a doctor's assistant, nurse, mental health primary care assistant practitioner or a doctor. It has a 24-hour helpline, which can be called in case of any medical questions.
Forensic Medical Service	The Forensic Medical Service (Forensisch Medische Maatschappij Utrecht, FMMU) is an independent agency, working on behalf of the IND to provide medical advice. Its medical advice forms an important element in the decision as to how the application will be handled. The aim of this examination is to ascertain whether the applicant has any mental or physical problems that could affect their interviews with the IND.
Legal Aid Board	The Legal Aid Board (Raad voor Rechtsbijstand, RvR) arranges legal representation for all applicants. The lawyer will receive a monetary allowance. Clients will pay part of the costs depending on the size of their income. Asylum seekers have no income and don't have to contribute. ¹⁸
Nidos	National guardianship institution for all unaccompanied children in the Netherlands. Also responsible for the reception of children aged 0-15 with or without status in family based care and children aged 15-18 with a status in small scale reception.

¹⁸ <http://www.refugeelegalaidinformation.org/netherlands-pro-bono-directory>, visited on 17 March 2020.

3 AVAILABLE FORMS OF RECEPTION

3.1 Description of Dutch reception system

The Dutch reception system for unaccompanied children, with a focus on family based care, is described in detail in the RLF report (de Ruijter de Wildt et al., 2015, p. 68-72¹⁹) as part of the overview of the situation concerning the provision of family based care to unaccompanied children in all 28 EU member states plus Norway and Switzerland. Another description of the system in which family based care is embedded in the Netherlands, including details on how it is organised, is provided in the ALFACA Manual (Schippers et al. 2016²⁰).

Guardians of the Nidos specialised intake team are present at the application centre where all applicants launch their asylum claim. Stakeholders work under one roof to provide their services to asylum seekers in this centre. The guardian is one of the first persons the child is talking to. During this intake the guardian welcomes the child and assesses their needs and background to decide what placement is in their best interest. Together with the child, the guardian tries to contact the family of the child, if safe, to find out if there is family in the Netherlands with whom the child could live but also to establish the first contact.

The available types of reception for unaccompanied children are:

Family Based Care

All children under 15 years of age live in reception families from the first day they arrive in the Netherlands. Nidos works with families with a migrant and refugee background and tries to place children in families with a similar cultural background. They are appointed a guardian from the beginning as well. The guardian monitors the placement, regularly meets the child and the family and has a case management role.

POL (15+ initial reception)

Children aged 15-18 live in a POL²¹ during their asylum application period. They will move to a different type of reception after a decision on their asylum claim has been made. At the POL, the guardian, together with the mentors of COA get to know the child and decide on suitable follow up reception, taking into account the asylum status and all other relevant factors.

Small scale reception facilities (15+ without residence permit)

After POL, children aged 15-18 whose asylum claim has been rejected move to small reception facilities (KWV) for this specific age group.

Small scale reception (15+ with residence permit)

After POL, children aged 15-18 with a residence permit²², move to small living groups (24/7 guidance) or small living units (18 hours guidance per week), depending on their independence. Organising small scale reception for children with a residence permit is Nidos' responsibility. Most of the small scale reception for children with a residence permit are managed by youth care organisations contracted by Nidos. Some of them are managed by Nidos' itself.

¹⁹ de Ruijter de Wildt, L., Melin, E., Ishola, P., Dolby, P., van de Pol, P. & Murk, J. (2015, February). Reception and Living in Families: Overview of family-based reception for unaccompanied minors in the EU Member States. Utrecht, the Netherlands: Nidos, SALAR, CHTB.

²⁰ Schippers M., van de Pol P., & de Ruijter de Wildt L. (Nidos), Thys K. (Minor-N'dako), Krogshøj Larsen M. (Danish Red Cross), Massoumi Z. (Jugendhilfe Süd-Niedersachsen) & Rozumek M. (Organization for Aid to Refugees) (2016), ALFACA Alternative Family Care. Manual for staff working with reception families and unaccompanied children living in reception families. Nidos, Utrecht, The Netherlands

²¹ Proces Reception Centre = first reception after arrival operated by COA, for children aged 15-18 during their asylum procedure. Period of stay normally around 3 months.

²² Exception: if a child without a residence permit is extra vulnerable, they can also be placed in small scale reception or in family based care.

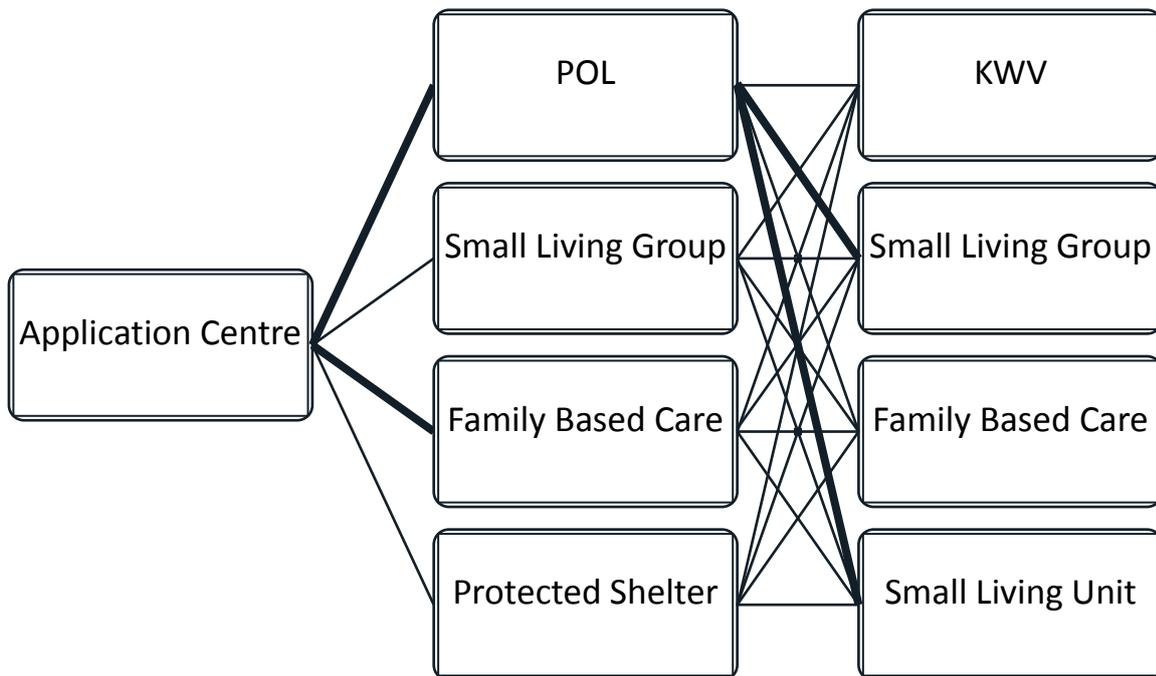
Protected shelters

Protected shelters are available for (possible) victims of human trafficking. Children who might be victim of trafficking move to a shelter from day 1.

POL and KVV are organised by COA. The protected shelters are also the responsibility of COA and are in practice carried out by contracted youth care organisations.

Family based care, small living groups and small living units are Nidos' responsibility. Some small living units are organised and managed by Nidos itself, but most of the small scale reception is carried out by youth care organisations contracted by Nidos, who are using the Nidos methodology.

3.2 An overview of the reception possibilities and routing



3.3 Recent developments and opportunities

3.3.1 Family based care till 21

From 2018 foster care for Dutch national children can be prolonged till the age of 21. Logically, this would apply to former unaccompanied children as well. Municipalities have the responsibility of financing and providing reception for former unaccompanied children with a residence permit. Some municipalities apply the prolongation to former unaccompanied children living in family based care. But quite a number of municipalities interpret the new policy in such a way that it doesn't apply to this group. It is therefore challenging for Nidos to prolong family based care for all children turning 18. For this reason, a working group "family based care for youngsters aged 18 and over" has been created to overcome the current challenges.

3.3.2 Part time family based care

Nidos is considering new types of partial family based care for unaccompanied children who could benefit from this. Such as guest families for unaccompanied children living in reception centres or small-scale reception. Guest families can regularly meet with a child and eat or do leisure activities with them, functioning as positive "family" connection for the child.

3.3.3 Pilot project for children from safe countries

In recent years, the Netherlands, similar to other EU member states, has seen an increase in the arrival of children from safe countries such as Northern African countries. Many of them have been traveling through different European countries before arriving in the Netherlands. As they come from safe countries and are often undocumented, their asylum claim will be rejected in all EU countries. Most of the children went through hardships in different European countries, such as living in the streets or being used by criminal organisations and often are addicted to substances. Severe cases were challenging guardians and other stakeholders to an extent that a special solution was needed. Nidos therefore initiated a pilot project catering to the needs of these children. Specialised small living units were set up as places where the children can unwind and get to rest, with very intensive guidance. The pilot is a close cooperation with COA. Together with the guardians of Nidos, COA can register children for the pilot project. The daily guidance is done by employees with a similar background as the children (mainly boys), who are experienced in dealing with severe and challenging cases.

4 GOOD PRACTICES, CHALLENGES AND NEEDS ON PROVIDING ALTERNATIVE CARE TO UAC AGED 15-18

4.1 From the perspective of the children

An explorative study into the fostering experiences of unaccompanied children, their foster carers and social workers (Rip. Et al., 2019²³) concluded that children and carers valued the cultural similarity of the placement. It also concluded that former unaccompanied children appreciated cultural similarity less. Overall, participants valued similarity of language the most.

Research among unaccompanied children by students from the university of Groningen (Hacquebord, van der Veen, Witteveen, Seosahai, 2018) showed that quality of care was rated highest by children in family based care, followed by children in small living units and small living groups. Children in larger facilities rated quality of care lowest.

In an interview with three Syrian former unaccompanied children (24 September 2020) on their initial experiences in the Netherlands, two of them highlighted their appreciation of the personal welcome and attention shown by the caretaker upon arrival in a small living unit such as having dinner together with the caretaker and a roommate and buying furniture together. In the same interview they mentioned that in the beginning of their stay the caretakers often reminded them of important appointments or actions to be taken but often didn't explain the reasons for its importance. They recommended caretakers to explain to unaccompanied children why certain appointments and actions are so important in order for them to be intrinsically motivated to go to these appointments.

4.2 From the perspective of stakeholders (including capacity building needs)

4.2.1 National manager family based care Nidos

Several challenges are indicated regarding the placement of children aged 15-18 in families by Nidos's national manager family based care²⁴:

- First, for this age group, a residence permit is required²⁵ to be placed in family based care. The children don't have one upon arrival and are placed in initial (POL) accommodation to await

²³ Rip, J., Zijlstra, E., Posta, W., Kalverboer, M., Knorth, E.J., (2020, May). 'It can never be as perfect as home': An explorative study into the fostering experiences of unaccompanied refugee children, their foster carers and social workers.

²⁴ Interview with Nidos' National Manager Family Based Care P. van de Pol, 23 March 2020.

²⁵ Exception: if a child aged 15-18 without a residence permit is extra vulnerable, they can also be placed in small scale reception or in family based care.

the decision on their asylum claim. They experience more freedom in a POL compared to living in a family. It can therefore be difficult to motivate them for family based care once they have obtained their residence permit and this type of reception is indicated as the most suitable reception. On the other hand, quite some children do not feel at home in large scale reception and ask to be placed in a family.

- Secondly, it's a challenge to have enough types of families available who are willing to let a child lead a more independent life.
- Also, it's not very attractive to place a 17-year-old in a family because of the challenge ensuring placement in families after majority described in paragraph 4 (recent developments and opportunities).
- To conclude, placing children from safe countries, such as Morocco, in families is also a challenge. But also, to find suitable families for them. This has to do with their specific problems such as substance addiction, survival behaviour, and their history of roaming and anarchy. Their age, they are often 16 or 17 years of age, also plays a role, while many of them are in fact adult man registered as minor.

4.2.2 Guardians

Guardians were asked to share the main challenges they experience in placing children aged 15-18 in family based care²⁶. They mentioned the following:

- In general, finding the right match is a challenge, as it depends on many different factors such as culture, nationality and religion, but also expectation of the child and the reception family, the knowledge and skills of foster parents and the chemistry between the child and the family.
- The desire of children for placement in a family from a specific culture or with a certain family composition can sometimes not be fulfilled because this specific family is not available at the time of placement.
- Children who have been living in initial reception (POL) who have a desire and/or need for family based care sometimes refrain from placement in fear of not maintaining their desired financial freedom. In initial reception they are used to receiving a weekly allowance which they can freely spend as they want, whereas foster parents might give them lower pocket money and might restrict and guide them more regarding spending.

4.2.3 Placement team

The Nidos placement team is responsible for coordinating all placements in small living arrangements and facilitating guardians in the placement procedure. A member of Nidos' placement team²⁷ indicates two challenges regarding placement of children aged 15-18 in small living arrangements:

- It can be hard to find a place that matches all the wishes and requirements of the child and the guardian. For example, a child wants to live with children from the same nationality, but this place is sometimes simply not available.
- It can be hard to find the right place for children with behavioural or psychological problems. They sometimes need very specific care and a suitable environment, and it may be difficult to find a place that offers it all.

²⁶ Written information provided by 2 guardians.

²⁷ Interview with member of Nidos' placement team F. Mahnin, 26 June 2020.

4.3 SWOT Analysis

This report mentions good practises, possible challenges and needs that Nidos encounters in (the entrance to) alternative care within the Dutch reception system for unaccompanied children aged 15-18. To provide a clear overview, they are displayed in the SWOT analysis below.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilot specialised small living units for children from safe countries. • Alternative care (small scale reception and family based care) available for all unaccompanied children in need of it. • Guardians and mentors working in reception facilities receive frequent training on working with- and taking care of UAC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A residence permit is required for children aged 15-18 to be placed in family based care but they don't have one upon arrival and are first placed in initial (POL) accommodation to await the decision on their asylum claim. They experience more freedom in a POL and it can therefore be difficult to motivate them for family based care once they have obtained their residence permit and family based care is indicated as the most suitable reception. • It's a challenge to have enough types of families available who are willing to let a child aged 15-18 lead a more independent life. • It's not very attractive to place a 17-year-old in a family because of the challenge ensuring placement in family based care after majority (see 'Threats'). • Placing children from safe countries, such a Morocco, in families and finding suitable families for them. • It can be hard to find a place that matches all the wishes and requirements of the child and the guardian. This specifically applies when finding a family for children aged 15-18. • The desire for placement in a family from a specific culture or with a certain family composition can sometimes not be fulfilled because this specific family is not available at the time of placement. • Children who have been living in initial reception (POL) who have a desire and/or need for family based care sometimes refrain from placement in fear of not maintaining their desired (and experienced) financial freedom.
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prolongation of foster care for Dutch children till the age of 21, with possibilities in making this available for UAC. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Municipalities are responsible for family based care for youngsters aged 18 years and over and some of them are not willing to offer it to UAC.

-
- Part time family based care (weekend- and part time family based care, use of guest families for UAC living in reception centres or small-scale units).
 - Finding the right place for children with behavioural or psychological problems. They sometimes need very specific care and a suitable environment and it may be difficult to find a place that offers it all.
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5 RECOMMENDATIONS

The alternative care system that is available in the Netherlands for unaccompanied children aged 15-18 is quite mature. There are no restrictions for unaccompanied children to enter this system. Alternative care, both small scale reception and family based care, is available for all unaccompanied children in need of it. However, as shown in this report, there is always room for improvement in different parts of the system itself. Nidos is aware of this and working on improvement is part of the daily work. One example is that the family based care department is currently planning to organise regular thematic meetings for the families who take care of unaccompanied children in cooperation with Nidos.