



# ACT-PROJECT

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



**CEA(R)**

Comissió Catalana  
d'Ajuda al Refugiat



**NIDOS**  
guardianship for refugees

## Training of Trainers Programme Bulgaria



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## INTRODUCTION

This training is a component of the Alternative Care Training (ACT) project. ACT is a cooperation of Lumos Foundation in Bulgaria with project partners from Italy and Spain, coordinated by Nidos Foundation in the Netherlands.

The ACT-project aims to improve the access to and increase the quality of alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied children (UAC) aged 15-18, through providing actors interested in developing family and community-based alternative care arrangements (different from institutional care) in the 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 to improve the sustainability of alternative care for unaccompanied children in member states.

A situational analysis has been carried out which collected information about the accessibility and quality of alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied children aged 15-18. Desk-based research was conducted in January- May 2020. Bulgarian stakeholders from were consulted in a meeting in July 2020 to provide their important input, which has also been included in this analysis. The opinion and advice from children are also crucial, and so their input was also provided via a survey. The results of the analysis in Bulgaria carried out by Lumos are summarised in this report; ranging from information on the general context, including the available forms of care, to current good practices, challenges and needs and recommendations. The information gathered in the desk research and the stakeholder meeting informed the development of this training programme, ensuring that it responded to the identified capacity building needs in Bulgaria.

An expert meeting was held in October 2020, which introduced stakeholders from Bulgaria and the other project countries to different options for alternative care which have been established in other EU MS. The expert meeting aimed to share learning and promote alternative care options for uac.

This training was held online, on 10-11 May 2021. The 17 participants included staff from a range of organisations who work with unaccompanied children in reception centres and small groups homes in Bulgaria, as well as those working in child protection and migration areas of the Bulgarian government. The training programme was designed by Lumos Foundation in cooperation with Nidos.

## SESSIONS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

### Session 1: The Development of Unaccompanied Children

Overview: Understanding unaccompanied children specific background and developmental needs by applying a cultural, age and safeguarding lens; individual and collective culture and differences in hierarchy of the needs

#### Learning Outcomes:

1. A shared basic framework on child development and needs, with an understanding of how family and community based alternative care is the best option to meet these needs.
2. An understanding about differences in the way UAC accept what is happening around them. An understanding of the difference from working with a person who grew up in Bulgaria. UAC may have different reactions because of their different values/culture.
3. Help staff understand what their role is in caring for these children.

## Session 2: Psychosocial support for unaccompanied children

Overview: windows of tolerance, understanding behavior, understanding resilience, protective factors, psychological first aid (PFA)

### Learning outcomes:

1. An understanding of behavioural patterns of UAC, and practical tools to support them in different situations.
2. Staff able to identify different psychosocial needs and to respond appropriately.
3. Staff have tools and understanding of how to communicate effectively with children at different ages and from different backgrounds.

## Session 3: Assessing and caring for unaccompanied children

Overview: case management, assessment (different elements); processes (presentation of various assessment tools, examples of BIAs and care plans/ checklists); role of cultural mediator;

### Learning Outcomes:

1. Clear understanding on how the case management process flows, how the tools underpin the process, and how to find best solutions within the context.
2. Care plans and care plan reviews are seen as an achievable goal and that they are done together with the child and the service provider. Staff see the importance of the care plan in all cases, even for short stay.
3. Understanding the importance of multi-sector communication and cooperation when working with uac, including cooperation between the child protection and migration actors, which could improve their access to alternative care when looking for the best care option to suit the needs of the individual child.
4. Understanding of the importance of cultural mediation.

## Session 4: supporting unaccompanied children toward independence

Overview: from PROUD - Living and selfcare, School and work, Health and wellbeing, Leisure time. It is important to describe why this work is important and the specifics of the different working fields. It will be very useful if different practical tools, instruments and methods are presented and exercised by the participants

### Learning outcomes:

1. Nidos to share their experience with supported independent living (SIL) and foster care, working with UAC, practical tools/approaches, health and wellbeing, rules, leisure, etc.
2. Shared understanding on risks and benefits of different forms of care, with a clear understanding of the benefits of family- and community-based alternative care over institutional care for unaccompanied children.

## Session 5: Supporting staff

Overview: Supporting the staff, working with unaccompanied minors – supervision, intervision, etc.

### Learning outcomes:

1. Understanding of the benefits of high-quality supervision and how it can be achieved. Why supervision is useful and necessary, to improve care for the child, to improve effectiveness of staff and to prevent staff burnout. Different types of supervision and intervision / team coaching.

## FULL TRAINING PROGRAMME

<b>Day 1</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Details</b>
9:30	Welcome and Housekeeping	Muting microphones, explain translation occurring so please try to speak clearly when presenting
9:35	Introductions	Overview of the ACT Project, introductions by trainers, participants to introduce themselves
10:00	Start of Session 1	The Development of Unaccompanied Children
10:00	Theories of attachment and child development, resilience, risk and protective factors	<p>Lumos to present on the theories of Attachment and Child Development, with a specific focus on 12-18 year old group.</p> <p>Lumos to present on Resilience, Risk and Protective Factors. Including how quality alternative care is a strong factor in developing good attachment and resilience in uac.</p> <p>Activity: Ask participants to think of a young person they know who has coped well with enormous adversity. Think about their personal characteristics, family environment, and social environment.</p> <p>Ask participants to describe factors that appear to promote resilience</p>
10:45	Break	
10:50	Putting this into practice to improve access to care for unaccompanied children	<p>Nidos to provide a case study of Ahmed, to explore these concepts at a practical, individual level. This also includes cultural aspects relevant to UAC.</p> <p>Nidos to link this all to how care arrangements for UAC should be small scale / family based.</p>
11:35	Break	
11:45	Start of Session 2	Psychosocial support for unaccompanied children
11:45	Overview of approaches to psychosocial support	Lumos to present on overview of approaches to psychosocial support for older children and effects of fear, separation and grief
12:30	Lunch Break	
13:45	Putting psychosocial support into practice for uac	<p>Nidos to present through the case study of Ahmed on how these approaches can be used for uac, with acknowledgement of cultural differences. Intercultural communication and use of intercultural mediators.</p> <p>Assignment: Practicing an intercultural interview.</p>
15:15	Break	
15:25	Start of Session 3	Assessing and caring for unaccompanied
15:25	Case management and multi-sector communication	Lumos to lead on the importance of case management and multi-sector communication and engagement
16:30	Finish	

<b>Day 2</b>		
<b>Time</b>	<b>Subject</b>	<b>Details</b>
9:30	Housekeeping	Muting microphones, explain translation occurring so please try to speak clearly when presenting
9:35	Overview	Brief overview of yesterday's training and any questions from day 1
10:00	Practical exercises with assessment tools	Nidos to lead on some simple assessment tools and activity on how to use these tools effectively.  Group work: Read the case and assess the strengths, the vulnerabilities, protective and risk factors, and the needs of Ahmed using the assessment tool. (i.e. What does Ahmed need to feel safe, to feel at home, What needs Hamid to deal with his trauma, grief and stress. What contributes to build on resilience and strengths?). Share benefits of using this tool in the plenary
11:00	Start of Session 4	Supporting unaccompanied children toward independence
11:00	Supported Independent Living and the benefits of alternative care	Short video on SIL in the Netherlands.  Group work: 1 What are the benefits and disadvantages (risks) of SIL for Ahmed 2 What are the benefits and disadvantages (risks) of large scale reception 3 What are the benefits and disadvantages (risks) of foster care for Ahmed
12:00	Interview with Nidos alternative care experts	Interview on SIL and Foster Care with experts from Nidos. Explaining how alternative care for uac is possible to establish and how these types of care are beneficial to uac.  Questions to start: What recommendations do you have to develop FC for UAC? What are some of the factors that contributed to you setting up FC/SIL. What are the challenges to having these forms of care?
12:45	Lunch break	
14:00	Start of Session 5	Supporting staff
14:00	Supervision and intervision	Nidos to present on both supervision and intervision. Lumos to input linking to Bulgarian practice and how these practices can improve staff working, which then allows staff to better serve the needs of children.
15:00	Break	
15:10	Reflection	Reflections on all that has been discussed so far regarding psychosocial support, assessments and SIL. How these skills and tools could be applied to the Bulgaria situation, how to increase access to care and improve support to children.  Groupwork:

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What activities, resources and services exist where they work with unaccompanied children or their local communities (refer back to the four levels of the psychosocial pyramid.)</li> <li>- What could be done to ensure that these resources and services uphold children's wellbeing?</li> <li>- Identify, what the gaps are in services.</li> <li>- Identify links and referral systems between activities, services and resources.</li> </ul>
15:40	Overview and summary of the whole training, final questions	
16:30	Finish	