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# GUIDE

Supporting Guardians of Unaccompanied Children



# TRANSNATIONAL TRAINING OF TRAINERS MANUAL

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# Transnational Training of Trainers Manual

## Introduction

The manual is divided into **five modules**, each designed to provide practical tools and knowledge for trainers in guardianship services. **The first four modules** are an exact copy of the **Fundamental Rights Agency's (FRA) Manual**, developed specifically for guardianship training. The **fifth module** is an additional, custom module that offers tools and methodologies to help trainers implement guardianship responsibilities in a **child-friendly and participative manner and developed together with the GUIDE project partners**.

The manual has therefore been tailored to meet the specific needs of trainers from five EU member states — Poland, Slovakia, Greece, Italy, and Bulgaria — who are involved in the [GUIDE project](#). It was developed through a process of **co-construction and grounding**, reflecting the input of trainers from these countries, and was tested in a **Training of Trainers (ToT) (D2.2)** framework through both online and in-person sessions held in Brussels. This is contributing to specific country-by-country national manuals that will be further grounded and contextualised in the project's country-specific settings.

This manual is intended to empower focal points in each participating country, equipping them to lead **"train-the-trainer"** sessions while ensuring that the material is responsive to their national guardianship systems.

The manual is grounded in key **international and EU legal frameworks**, including:

- **United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)**
- **Charter of Fundamental Rights of the European Union**

These frameworks ensure that guardianship services across EU Member States promote the rights and best interests of children, with particular focus on the child's **individual story, resources, and capacities**. The manual provides trainers with tools to help guardians operate in an **independent, impartial, and confident** manner, particularly in interactions with:

- **State officials**
- **Service providers**
- **Community members**

This manual is not a standalone resource; it builds on an extensive set of documents and guidelines developed by the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)**. Key reference materials include:

- FRA's **Handbooks** on guardianship systems
- Research on **child relocation and return**
- Guides on the **rights of the child** and **asylum law**

Additionally, the manual incorporates references to a **web-based learning platform**, built on **Moodle**, which complements the training manual. This platform offers:

- **Presentations**
- **Videos**
- **Interactive exercises**
- **Additional materials** for distance learning

Participants (and readers) are encouraged to access the **FRA's e-learning platform** for more comprehensive information.

We have also worked in collaboration with other e-learning sources e.g. [Solentra Academy](#) and [WELL-U | ChildHub - Child Protection Hub](#).

By the end of the training completed in accordance with this Manual, trainers will be equipped not only with knowledge and skills but also with the confidence to support the children and guardians under their care, ensuring that all actions taken prioritise the child's best interests.

A special thank you therefore to the **European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) for their support, as well as to the European Union Agency for Asylum (EUAA), the European Disability Forum (EDF) and the Belgian Guardianship Authorities** who also have given their time to support the initial phase of this GUIDE project.

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**ALL MATERIALS FOR TRAINERS** (case studies, handouts, presentations, self-evaluation of learning outcomes tools, glossary, and text of this Manual) are located in [this](#) folder.

# Part 1: Guidance and Tips for Trainers

The curriculum is structured into five Modules, comprising 12 training sessions, with a total estimated duration of 30 hours<sup>1</sup>. These sessions are designed to build on each other, progressively enhancing the participants' understanding and skills.

The training sessions refer to several resources available on the FRA e-learning platform, including:

- **Handouts:** Supplementary materials that support the learning objectives of each session<sup>2</sup>.
- **Glossary:** A comprehensive list of terms and definitions relevant to the training.
- **List of Resources and Further Reading:** Additional materials and references to deepen understanding and provide further context.

All these resources are accessible on the FRA e-learning platform and are intended to complement the manual and enrich the learning experience.

## The structure of the training program

**Module 1: The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child:** a guide for analysis and action guides the trainer in sensitising guardians to the convention as a legal document and the opportunities it offers as a practical guide.

- **Session 1.1: The human rights of the child:** a comprehensive guide for analysis and action.
- **Session 1.2: Risk and resilience** of children: understanding vulnerability as a rights-based and empowering concept.
- **Session 1.3: Children on the move: migration experiences and life stories.**

**Module 2: Guardianship in the best interests of the child** introduces the tasks of the guardian. It introduces their role as a link between the child and state agencies and services. Guardians learn about the services and procedures in which the unaccompanied child is involved, and the referral mechanisms.

- **Session 2.1: Creating an effective relationship** between guardian and child.
- **Session 2.2: The mandate** and tasks of the guardian.
- **Session 2.3: Promoting the best interests** of the child in relation to state authorities and service providers.

**Module 3: Supporting the child from arrival to durable solution** provides step-by-step guidance on the guardian's role in case assessment, decision-making processes and formal procedures concerning the

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<sup>1</sup> The sessions will take the time needed according to the trainers and the (level of the) participants. Discussion time and practice are essential at the country level and therefore adequate time should be dedicated to this. How that is done (on site or online) will depend on the context and needs.

<sup>2</sup> The Trainers Materials master folder contains a set of additional sub-folders and documents related to Module 5.

child. These include those from the moment of arrival through to the identification and implementation of a durable solution.

- **Session 3.1: From arrival to durable solution:** identifying and responding to the child's needs.
- **Session 3.2: From arrival to durable solution:** promoting the best interests of the child in decisions and proceedings.

**Module 4: Quality standards and accountability of guardianship services** focuses on the support network that guardians can or should be able to count on when exercising their role. It also explores ethical standards and matters of accountability.

- **Session 4.1: A support network** for guardians and accountability.
- **Session 4.2: Ethical standards** in guardianship services.

**Module 5: Tools for working with children** across a wide spectrum of situations. It enables to strengthen the relation with the child, taking into account the cultural dimension, the vulnerabilities and special needs of our children with disabilities.

- **Session 5.1: Holistic Care for Migrant Children Using the Journey of Life Tool, Active Listening and Case Management:** open discussion and active listening. The child is put into an active role in defining their trajectory and perspectives on their situation. This is done in a child friendly and safe way. The information produced serves objectives related to **assessments** (notably related to vulnerabilities, risks and strengths), **BID, cultural competences, family tracing, and identification and prevention of challenges** of the guardianship relationship and trajectory, **experience of migrancy and disability**.
- **Session 5.2: i) Strengthening Well-Being, Resilience, and Safety of Children:** ii) understanding Trauma, Crisis intervention, Psychological 1st Aid; iii) Conflict management, Misconduct and Positive discipline.

## Development of the training

The training was developed through a comprehensive and collaborative process, consisting of the following key steps:

- Five country capacity analysis reports
- Recommendations report
- Peer review of the draft manual
- Pilot test of the manual

The above entails that support was also requested and offered by the GUIDE Advisory Board members (European Guardianship Network (EGN), Save the Children Europe and Save the Children Italy). Advice was also given by Service de Tutelle SPF Justice authorities Belgium.

*Again though, it is important to underscore that the training would not have been possible without the solid foundation the FRA manual constitutes as regards the training of the ToTs.*

### Equipment and Tools Facilitating Interactive Learning

To enhance interactive learning in both in-person and online settings, the manual recommends using various equipment and tools. The effective use of technology plays a crucial role in this process.

A whiteboard and or flip chart should be available for each session. It serves multiple purposes, including making notes, drawing figures and charts, and keeping track of participants' contributions, reflections, and discussions.

It is recommended to keep equipment to the minimum but prepare handouts and notebooks and pens for taking notes of key ideas, points made.

Social workers should also have notebooks to keep track of key ideas and events, and serve as the basis of archiving and accountability.

### **In-person training**

- The trainer works with a flipchart
- The trainer can remove used flipchart paper sheets from the stand and attaches them to the training room walls so that participants can refer to them during the session
- At the end of each session, the trainer takes photos of the flipchart paper sheets. The photos can be stored and shared with the group
- Materials include a flipchart, Post-it notes in different colours and marker pens for the trainer to write on the flipchart and for each participant
- Projector/Big screen

### **Online training**

The trainer uses a digital drawing application as a virtual whiteboard, such as:

- Sketchbook, a page where the trainer can write or draw
- Miro (or equivalent), where participants can write and post stickers on the shared whiteboard
- The Mentimeter or Slido applications, which enable interactive presentations. They also allow live polls, quizzes or word clouds to seek and receive real-time input from participants
- The trainer takes a screenshot of the material developed by the group and shares it with participants at the end

Some unresolved questions may need to be addressed at a later point. Some issues need more reflection time and research. However, a follow-up needs to be done. Participants can keep note of these and or have a system of post its on a board that the group takes up and follows through with.

### **Creating a repository of resources**

To enhance the learning experience and support ongoing knowledge sharing, the trainer encourages participants to contribute documents, materials, and other resources related to the training session's content or relevant to the guardian's role. A repository is created to collect and store these resources.



- **Repository setup:** The repository can be hosted on various platforms, such as flipchart paper, a virtual whiteboard, or a shared drive. The key is to ensure that the contents remain accessible to participants even after the training program concludes.
- **Types of resources:** The repository can include references to books, reports, newspaper articles, legal documents, policy papers, country information databases, tools for guardians, videos, and more.
- **Access to additional resources:** Trainers and participants can also access a glossary and a list of references and further reading available on the FRA e-learning platform.

### Evaluating the training

To assess the effectiveness of the training, an evaluation exercise is recommended after the course, guided by **Kirkpatrick's four levels of training evaluation**:

1. **Reaction:** This level measures participants' immediate feedback on the training, focusing on its relevance, usefulness, and interactivity.
2. **Learning:** This level assesses participants' increase in knowledge and skills as a result of the training.
3. **Behaviour:** This level evaluates participants' ability to apply what they have learned over time, including their success in transferring knowledge to others.
4. **Results:** The final level examines whether the training enabled participants to achieve the desired outcomes.

**Evaluation tools:** The trainer should at least provide level 1 and level 2 evaluation sheets at the end of the training. Alternatively, an online evaluation survey can be conducted.

**Continuous improvement:** Feedback from these evaluations allows the trainer to adapt and refine the training program to better meet the needs of future target groups.

**Interactive assessment:** The FRA e-learning platform offers interactive exercises, quizzes, and learning assessment tools that facilitate both the learning process and the evaluation of learning outcomes.

## Training session plan

The training sessions follow a standardised structure. Each session follows the same pattern, comprising short presentations, plenary discussions and group exercises. In this way, participants become familiar with the format of sessions, and interaction among participants is fostered. The following generic plan provides an overview of the activities during each training session. The session plan applies irrespective of whether the course is in-person training, distance learning or a blended programme.

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and Recap

- **Methodological Considerations:** Start the session by welcoming participants and briefly recapping the key points from the previous session. This helps reorient participants and sets a positive tone.
- **Estimated Time:** 15 minutes

### 2. Biographical Narrative Exercise

- **Methodological Considerations:** Engage participants in a biographical narrative exercise to create a personal connection with the thematic field. This activity helps participants relate the session’s content to their own experiences and enhances engagement.
- **Estimated Time:** 15-45 minutes

### 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- **Methodological Considerations:** Introduce the key topics and concepts that will be covered in the session. This segment helps to establish the thematic field and ensures that participants understand the focus of the session.
- **Estimated Time:** 15-20 minutes

#### Comfort Break

- **Methodological Considerations:** A short break can be scheduled before, during, or after the interactive group work, depending on the flow of the session and the needs of the participants. This break allows participants to recharge and prepares them for the next intensive activity.
- **Estimated Time:** 10 minutes

### 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

- **Methodological Considerations:** Participants engage in group work to explore the thematic field in depth. This activity encourages collaboration, critical thinking, and the practical application of concepts.
- **Estimated Time:** 60 minutes (or more if needed)

### 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

- **Methodological Considerations:** After the group work, reconvene for a plenary discussion where participants reflect on and analyse their findings. This segment helps to consolidate learning and draw out key insights from the group activity.
- **Estimated Time:** 25 minutes

### 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

- **Methodological Considerations:** End the session by summarising the key points discussed and addressing any open questions. This closure helps solidify participants’ understanding and prepares them for the next session.
- **Estimated Time:** 10 minutes

The sessions are built to **last 2.5 to 3 hours**. The time you take however depends on needs, size of group, capacities, medium (in-situ or online) and constraints (how much time participants have).

## Structure of each session

### 1. Opening of the Session (15 mins)

#### Purpose: Welcome and Recap

In the first training session, the trainer uses the initial 15 minutes to **introduce the training programme** and **welcome the participants**. **Subsequent sessions** start with the trainer welcoming the participants, followed by a recap of the previous session.

Each training session begins with quotations relevant to the session's main themes. These **quotations**, gathered during the development of the training programme, come from guardians and from unaccompanied children or young adults who had been supported by a guardian. The quotations illustrate individual views and are not necessarily representative of these populations. They have been anonymised in accordance with the informed consent of the children and adults concerned, and with due respect to ethical and child safeguarding standards.

#### Main Activity:

- The trainer starts by using the [Guardianship Wheel](#) to locate the training session within the interconnected themes (see Figure 1).
- From the second training session onwards, a group of participants recaps the key messages and learning from the previous session. For the recap, the volunteers work together to prepare a one-page summary for the group. They distribute this summary at the beginning of the session or send it via email prior to the session. Volunteers present their summary in a maximum of five minutes.
- The trainer ensures that all participants volunteer to do the recap at least once during the training programme.
- The trainer compiles all the recap [handouts](#) into an online resource centre, with access restricted to participants (e.g., using Dropbox or similar services). These compiled notes become a resource that participants can refer to after the training programme when acting as guardians.
- Alternatively, the trainer can lead a collective recap session, engaging all participants.
- Where appropriate, in academic or professional training contexts, *the trainer could ask participants to prepare a presentation and brief paper on a specific theme*. Participants can choose from a list of themes provided by the trainer. The deadline for submission is the date when the theme will be covered in the course.
- The national capacity reports, matrixes and desk reviews are useful documents from which to extract relevant information and ground the sessions.

## 2. Biographical narrative exercise (30 mins<sup>3</sup>)

### Purpose: Creating a Personal Connection with the Thematic Field

The repetition of the opening and this warm-up exercise helps facilitate participants' engagement on a technical level and in their professional capacities. Additionally, it encourages them to connect with the material in light of their personal stories and experiences. This exercise can be adapted as needed to align with the main theme of each session.

#### Main Activity:

- The trainer poses a question related to the theme of the training session, asking participants to reflect on it based on their *personal experiences and memories*.

#### In-Person Training Sessions:

- The trainer asks each participant to write a key word on a Post-it note that captures their response to the posed question.
- Participants then place their Post-it notes on the flipchart.
- Once all participants have completed this task, the trainer reads out the key words one by one.
- The trainer then invites the participant who wrote each key word to take the floor and explain or comment on it.

#### Online Training Sessions

The trainer asks participants to write key words in the chat function of the video-conferencing platform. Once all participants have done so, the trainer calls on them one by one to comment on their key word. Alternatively, the trainer could invite participants to take the floor and say their key word without adding comments or explanations. Meanwhile, the trainer writes the words on a virtual whiteboard.

At the end of the exercise, the trainer takes a screenshot of the virtual whiteboard. This material is then made available to participants through a shared drive or another shared space.

The trainer should remind participants in each session that they are not required to share personal stories. Instead, they can refer to their professional experience, objects, third persons, books, or movies.

## 3. Introduction (15 mins)

### Purpose: Setting the Thematic Field

The trainer's introduction aims to establish the thematic field of the training session.

#### Main Activity:

- The trainer shares key terms, definitions, and hints about what the group will discuss during the session. These elements are connected to the session's objectives, including the questions the session aims to address and the key terms and definitions participants should learn.

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<sup>3</sup> The time taken is only indicative and is linked to the number of participants, the time you want to spend on the specific topic / session with more or less depth, and availability of time for everyone.

- The trainer should thoroughly study the session content and prepare the necessary key facts, definitions, and questions to effectively introduce the session. This preparation allows the trainer to adapt the training program to the specific context and setting, considering local needs and the participants' backgrounds.
- The trainer may refer to the glossary, reference list, and relevant national sources to inform their preparations.

## Break

The trainer decides when best to break based on the session's dynamics. The break can be before, during or after the interactive group work.

## 4. Interactive group work (60 mins)

### Purpose: Exploring the Thematic Field

The trainer leads a group discussion focused on the main themes and questions addressed during the session. The interactive group work aims to stimulate critical thinking and analysis.

### Main Activity:

- The trainer guides participants through an exercise that encourages them to engage with the thematic field both individually and collectively, drawing from their personal and professional experiences.
- **Source:** See Annex 1, Methodology Note 5.

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## 5. Concluding observations (25 mins)

### Purpose: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

In the session's concluding observations, the trainer engages the group in a joint summing-up exercise to identify the main learning points and conclusions from the training session.

### Main Activity:

- The trainer begins by *summarising the key points and learning from the session*, starting with the facts, key terms, and questions presented at the beginning.
- The trainer then *compares these initial elements with the outcomes of the group discussion*, including the questions participants raised and their contributions based on their experiences.
- Next, the trainer presents the Guardianship Wheel (see Figure 1) and locates the training session on the wheel.
- The trainer engages participants in a discussion on how this session relates to previous and upcoming sessions, as well as to other levels of the wheel.

Finally, the trainer refers participants to the FRA e-learning platform and explains how they can use this tool in their learning experience and in their roles as guardians.

## 6. Closure of the session

### Purpose: Concluding Remarks, and Preparing and Announcing the Next Session

#### Main Activity:

The trainer asks participants to identify a group of two to four volunteers who will prepare and present the recap at the next session, similar to the process described in the opening session.

These volunteers are asked to meet (physically or online) before the next training session to prepare a one-page summary handout. This handout will be presented to the other participants at the next session.

The summary should address the following questions:

1. What is the main knowledge that you have acquired during the training session?
2. What have you learned about the perspective of the child?
3. What have you learned about the rights and needs of the child?
4. What main conclusions can you draw from the training session with regard to your role as a guardian?

**N.B.** The trainer may also assign additional tasks to be carried out during sessions or as homework, depending on the training setting and needs. Optional case study exercises, interactive exercises, quizzes, and tests for self-evaluation of learning progress are available on the web-based FRA e-learning platform.

**N.B.** The sessions are built to last 2.5 to 3 hours. The time you take however depends on needs, size of group, capacities, medium (in-situ or online) and constraints (how much time participants have).

## Session Handouts

Each training session, except for Session 2.1, utilises handout materials for participants. These handouts can be accessed at <https://e-learning.fra.europa.eu/>.

The trainer is responsible for downloading the handouts and sharing them with participants, either as printed copies or as electronic PDF files.

**All materials for trainers** (including case studies, but also handouts, presentations, self-evaluation of learning outcomes tools, glossary, and text of this Manual) are located in [this](#) folder.

## The Guardianship Wheel

The **Guardianship Wheel** (Figure 1) visually represents the various thematic areas covered in the training and how they interconnect. Each level of the wheel corresponds to a training session, with some levels combining two closely related sessions.

- The training program starts by focusing on the child as an individual with unique needs and a personal life story. It then introduces the concept of the child as a rights holder, exploring the human rights afforded to children under the UNCRC.



- Centre: The child and the guardian
- Level 1: Children's rights principles
- Level 2: Risk and resilience of the child
- Level 3: The child's migration story
- Level 4: Age and evolving capacities of the child
- Level 5: Mandate and tasks of the guardian
- Level 6: Promoting the rights and best interests of the child
- Level 7: Ethical standards, accountability and support network for the guardian
- Level 8: To know – to do – to be
- Level 9: Primary needs – development – protection – participation

## Guest Lectures

The training program is designed to be stand-alone and self-sufficient. However, it can be enhanced by incorporating input from guest lecturers. Trainers may invite experienced professionals from various specialisations to share information and their experiences on themes relevant to guardians. Additionally, local and regional guest lecturers can assist participants in building support networks with knowledgeable professionals and relevant institutions and organisations.

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### Recommendations for Inviting Guest Lecturers:

- **Sources:** Trainers are encouraged to invite guest lecturers from national or local organisations, universities, international organisations, and service providers.
- **Types of Experts:** This includes other knowledgeable experts and experienced guardians who can offer valuable insights and practical knowledge.

### Format and Duration:

- Including guest lectures will extend the overall duration of the training program. Guest lectures are typically scheduled for 60 minutes and follow a basic format.

## Guest Lecture Format

Activity	Main Actors	Estimated Time (Minutes)
Opening Session and Welcome	Trainer	10
Guest Lecture	Guest Lecturer	30
Questions and Answers Discussion	Participants and Guest Lecturer, Trainer as Moderator	15
Closure of the Training Session	Trainer	5

Total Duration: 60 minutes



## Involving Young Adults as Co-Trainers

Some trainers may have experience engaging adolescents and young adults as co-trainers in their programs. Inviting young adults who have recently left care but were supported by a guardian as children can provide participants with valuable insights and personal experiences. This approach allows participants to benefit from the advice and recommendations of individuals who have direct experience with guardianship.

### Considerations:

- **Ethical and Safeguarding Principles:** It is crucial to ensure that the participation of young adults respects ethical and safeguarding principles. Trainers must be able to uphold these standards throughout the young person's involvement in the program.
- **Alternative Methods:** Children's voices can also be included in the training through videos, movies, or literature, providing additional perspectives on their experiences.

## Training Approach and Methodology

The methodology notes are designed to guide and orient trainers in their approach. See **annexes** at the end of this document for the full version of the methodology notes.

### Overview of methodology notes for trainers

#### Methodology Note 1: Promoting the Rights of the Child as a Framework for Guardianship Services and Training

The training approach is grounded in international and EU standards, particularly the UNCRC and EU law. It proposes a children's rights-based tool to guide guardians in analysing situations, assessing the child's needs, and advocating for the child's rights and best interests.

#### Methodology Note 2: Promoting a Transdisciplinary Approach

The training program fosters a child-centered, rights-based perspective in guardianship services. It encourages a transdisciplinary approach that transcends the limitations of state actors and service providers acting within their own mandates. This approach empowers guardians to advocate effectively for the child's rights across various state officials and service providers.

#### Methodology Note 3: Empowering Guardians to Advocate for the Rights of the Child

The program enhances guardians' awareness of the strengths and weaknesses within national child protection and reception systems. It equips them with tools to assess how these limitations impact the child and prepares them to advocate independently and impartially for the child's rights.

#### Methodology Note 4: Encouraging Guardians to Seek and Mobilise Support

Guardians are sensitised to the importance of mobilising support for both the child and themselves. The program underscores that guardians are not expected to resolve all issues on their own but should seek and use available support to address complex, multidimensional problems.

### **Methodology Note 5: Promoting an Interactive and Explorative Learning Process**

The training program fosters an interactive learning environment where participants and trainers collaboratively develop new knowledge. This approach engages all parties in an exploratory learning process.

### **Methodology Note 6: Facilitating Person-Centered Learning Using Biographical Narration**

Participants are encouraged to connect with the learning content through their professional roles and personal experiences. The program incorporates biographical narrative exercises at the beginning of each session to facilitate this connection.

### **Methodology Note 7: Strengthening the Transcultural Competence of Guardians**

The program supports the development of transcultural sensitivity and competence among guardians. It emphasises defending the child's rights and best interests while respecting the child's cultural rights, expression, and participation.

### **Methodology Note 8: Fostering Resource-Based Communication and Interaction**

The training encourages collaborative and explorative communication between participants and trainers. It values and builds upon the personal and professional experiences, knowledge, and reflections of everyone involved, leveraging the resources of each participant.

## Part 2: Training Curriculum

# Module 1: THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD – A GUIDE FOR ANALYSIS AND ACTION

### Module Overview

#### **Session 1.1: The Human Rights of the Child: A Comprehensive Guide for Analysis and Action**

This session provides an in-depth guide to the human rights of the child, focusing on the framework for analysis and action. It explores the core principles and legal standards that underpin children's rights, offering a comprehensive understanding essential for effective guardianship.

#### **Session 1.2: Risk and Resilience of Children: Understanding Vulnerability as a Rights-Based and Empowering Concept**

This session delves into the concepts of risk and resilience, examining vulnerability through a rights-based perspective. It aims to empower participants by providing tools to understand and address the various challenges faced by children while promoting their capacity for resilience.

#### **Session 1.3: Children on the Move: Migration Experiences and Life Stories**

This session focuses on the experiences and life stories of children who migrate. It provides insights into the unique challenges and perspectives of children on the move, helping guardians to better understand and support these children through their migration journeys.

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### Objectives of Module 1

Module 1 introduces the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and its general principles as the primary framework for guardianship services. This Module guides both trainers and participants in utilising the UNCRC to map and analyse a child's needs and ensure that decisions and actions adhere to rights-based standards.

The three training sessions in this Module enable participants to assess a child's risks and resilience. These depend on the child's background, migration story, current situation and future outlook.

Participants become familiar with analysing risks and resilience from a children's rights-based perspective and are given the tools to apply this understanding in practice. Introducing children's migration stories sensitises participants to the importance of hearing the child's story.

### Overall Learning Outcomes:

1. Use the UNCRC as a Comprehensive Transdisciplinary Guide for Guardianship Services.
2. Analyse How Risks and Resilience Influence the Vulnerability of the Unaccompanied Child.

3. Identify the Specifics of the Migration Stories of Children.
4. Appreciate the Importance of Hearing the Child's Story.

## Session 1.1: The human rights of the child: a comprehensive guide for analysis and action

Guardianship Wheel level 1: Children's rights principles

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### Quotation from child

*"I have always heard them speaking about my rights but that were only words, in reality no one cared about it. When my guardian told me that he will take care that the people in the reception centre respect my rights, I thought that were again only words, but then he really stood up for me, no one has ever done that."*

### Quotations from guardians

*"I have heard about child rights with regard to children in war and children suffering hunger, I thought child rights were something that concerns other continents."*

*"When I realised that it was my task to defend the rights of this boy, I thought that was too big a task for me and could only be done by a lawyer. But, over time, I understood that thinking and speaking about his rights is something I have to do constantly and it's good because it helps me to get a clear idea of the situation and what to do."*

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## A. Session overview

### Key Messages

- The UNCRC sets out the human rights of all people under 18.
- The rights in the UNCRC relate to all aspects of a child's life and are indivisible and inter-related.
- The UNCRC creates obligations for state authorities and service providers.
- Guaranteeing the child's rights requires close collaboration between all the disciplines relevant to the child's development, well-being, and protection.

- The UNCRC can be read as a multidisciplinary guide for guardians. It orients them regarding assessing the needs, safeguarding the rights, and promoting the best interests of the child.

## Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

### KNOW

- Describe the rights of the child that the UNCRC affords.
- Explain the meaning and importance of a children's rights-based approach.

### DO

- Assess the child's individual needs and update this assessment periodically in the light of the child's evolving needs.
- Use the UNCRC as a guide for decisions and actions concerning the child.

### BE

- Be aware of the child's needs, including normal needs and special needs in the light of diverse life stories.
- Be open to considering all the child's needs as closely inter-related.

## Preparation

### Thematic preparation

The trainer prepares the main facts, definitions, and questions required to introduce this session. The trainer should adapt the training programme to the specific training context, local needs, and participants' backgrounds. The trainer may use the glossary (available on FRA's e-learning platform), the reference lists, and national sources.

### Guest Lectures

#### Key points of discussion

- Status of UNCRC implementation: achievements and challenges in the country where the training takes place. (report to download from the committee of the right of children)
- Institutions responsible for UNCRC policy-making, implementation, and monitoring at national, regional, and local levels in the country where the training takes place.
- The role of civil society actors and organisations.

#### Possible invitees to consider

- A representative of a children's rights institution, commission, or organisation, such as: A national or regional ombuds office or human rights institute; A university faculty member with expertise in children's rights; A representative from a specialised UN agency; A representative from an international, national, or local non-governmental organisation (NGO).

## Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 1:** The rights of the child in relation to the four dimensions of the UNCRC.

- **Handout 2:** The rights of the child in EU law.
- **Handout 3:** The general principles of the UNCRC.

The trainer prepares the following additional handouts in the national language:

- The Charter
- The UNCRC. See if you can have a child friendly version

## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and Introduction to the Course

- Opening of the training programme and welcoming the participants.
- Introduction to the training programme.

### 2. Biographical Narrative Exercise: Introduction of the Trainer and Participants, and Creating a Personal Connection with the Thematic Field

- The trainer asks the participants to reflect on someone who was important in their life as a mentor or in another significant role, focusing on someone important during their childhood or adolescence.
- Participants write a key word describing this person on a Post-it note. They then stick their Post-it notes to the flipchart.
- When all participants have completed this task, the trainer reads out each key word and asks the participant who contributed to comment on it, explaining how it relates to their chosen person and why this person was significant.
- After participants share these memories, the trainers identifies their own key word, comments on it, and introduces themselves. Participants then introduce themselves, providing their name and any additional information they wish to share, such as their profession.
- For more information, see Annex 1, Methodology Note 6.

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### 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the main themes and questions that the training session will address. Participants are informed that through the activities and joint reflection, they will explore the meaning of the UNCRC and the opportunities it offers for the role of a guardian.

### 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

#### *First Step: Brainstorming on the Needs of a Child*

- The trainer draws the symbol of a child in the middle of a sheet of paper on a flipchart (see Annex 1, Methodology Note 1, Figure 3). This child represents any girl or boy aged between 0 and 17 years. The trainer asks participants to engage in collective brainstorming on the needs of the child.

- As participants share their thoughts, the trainer notes key words on the flipchart.
- If the discussion halts prematurely, the trainer prompts participants about specific aspects of a child's life that may not have been mentioned, such as food, clean water and air, healthcare, school enrolment, leisure time, play, sports, religion, contact with family members, identity papers, birth certificates, and nationality. This continues until participants have compiled a relatively comprehensive list of a child's needs. The importance of the families of unaccompanied children is emphasised.

### *Second Step: Differences in the Needs of Children and Adults*

- The trainer initiates a second group activity. Participants reflect on the needs of an adult and how these differ from those of a child. As participants share their comments, the trainer checks if the identified needs are already listed on the flipchart and uses a different colour of marker pen to record needs that have not yet been mentioned.
- When the brainstorming ends, the trainer asks participants to reflect if the needs of adults that they identified could be a child's needs as well. The trainer invites the participants to think, in particular, about adolescents, who may have very similar needs to adults. For example, they may have similar needs for work and employment, money, contributing to the family income, intimate relationships, and sexuality.
- The exercise aims to sensitise the participants to the fact that children's needs are not necessarily infantile and specific to young children. Rather, they are very close to general human needs. Children and adults may have similar perspectives on life and responsibilities.
- Afterwards, the trainer asks the participants to put themselves in the shoes of a child or an adolescent. How would a young person describe their own needs and how might their perspective differ from that of adults? The trainer adds additional key words emerging from this discussion to the flipchart, using a different colour of marker pen again.

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### *Third step: organising needs in clusters*

- The trainer and participants revisit the map of needs they have created. The trainer points out that many of the needs they identified are very closely related and interdependent. Failure to meet one need may create challenges for a whole set of other needs that remain unaddressed. It is important to stress the importance of family tracing and to mention that family reunification, provided it is in the best interests of the child, might address some needs.
- The trainer and the participants discuss how the needs listed on the flipchart can be grouped in clusters. The trainer steers the group reflection towards understanding that children's needs can be organised in four main clusters:
  - **Basic needs** that have to be met to ensure the child's health and survival (food, shelter, security and safety).
  - Needs related to the **development** of the child, including physical, emotional, social, cognitive, and other areas of development. Some of these can be addressed through the family. Also peers and the community are important.

- Needs related to the child’s **participation** in social and political life, and in decision making that concerns the child.
- Needs related to the safety, well-being, and **protection** of the child.
- The trainer raises the importance of responding to these needs in a *holistic manner*. Services available for a child – such as healthcare, education, or accommodation services – often consider specific needs separately. These services are provided typically from a perspective determined by the service provider’s mandate and professional specialisation. **The perspective of the child or their family is naturally more holistic and comprehensive.**

*Fourth step: the four dimensions of the UNCRC*

- The trainer displays the flipchart paper with the compiled needs of the child on one of the walls of the meeting room, where the participants and the trainer can see it easily. The trainer takes another sheet of flipchart paper and draws on it two intersecting lines, one horizontal and one vertical, creating four quadrants representing the four clusters of needs identified above. The symbol of the child remains at the centre of the chart. The trainer notes one dimension of the UNCRC in each of the four quadrants: basic needs, development, participation, and protection. The trainer uses the four quadrants on the flipchart as a map for assessing the needs of the child. Each quadrant also represents one of the four main dimensions of the rights of the child and the obligations of states, as afforded by the UNCRC:
  1. Responding to *primary needs* to secure the life, survival, and health of the child.
  2. Promoting the child’s *development*.
  3. Enabling the child to *take part* in the family and community, and to be heard in all matters affecting the child.
  4. Ensuring the child is *protected* against all forms of violence, exploitation, and neglect.
- The trainer tells participants that each of these dimensions is central to the role of the guardian and that they will refer to them repeatedly throughout the training programme.

*Fifth step: group work to match the child’s needs with the rights of the child*

- The trainer divides the participants into four working groups. Their task is to reflect on the needs of an unaccompanied child from a perspective that focuses on the rights of the child. The key question is “Which rights correspond to the needs of an unaccompanied child?”
- The participants use the list of needs pinned to the wall as a reference for their brainstorming. After 20–25 minutes, the groups report to the plenary. The trainer notes their comments and conclusions on the flipchart displaying the four dimensions of the UNCRC. While doing this, the trainer gets participants to identify which rights fall into each of the four dimensions.
- This discussion consolidates participants’ understanding of the UNCRC’s dimensions as an analytical map for assessing children’s needs and rights. It also fosters an understanding of how closely the four dimensions are related.



## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

The trainer concludes the session with an interactive exercise in which the participants engage in joint reflection and analysis.

### *First step: getting to know the children's rights afforded by the UNCRC*

- The trainer directs participants' attention to the map of the child's needs and rights created during the session, noting that these rights are afforded by the UNCRC.
- The trainer references specific articles of the UNCRC to align the rights with the four sections on the flipchart, as detailed in [Handout 1](#). They explain the content of these articles and provide participants with [Handout 1](#) for future reference.
- The UNCRC grants children deprived of parental care the right to a guardian, addressing a specific need. This situation arises when parents are unable or unavailable to care for the child, are responsible for violence or exploitation, or are separated from their child during migration.
- The UNCRC covers the common needs of all children in alternative care, emphasising the right to care and protection (Article 20). Family tracing is a crucial initial step if it serves the child's best interests.

Four UNCRC articles are considered fundamental "general principles," relevant to the implementation of all rights:

- Right to **non-discrimination** (Article 2)
- **Best interests** of the child as a primary consideration (Article 3)
- Right to **life, survival, and development** (Article 6)
- Right of the child to **be heard** and to **have their views considered** (Article 12)  
*These principles are summarised in [Handout 3](#).*

The trainer also informs participants about the reflection of children's rights in EU law, introducing the Charter and relevant articles (Articles 14(3), 24, 32, and 33) on children's rights (see [Handout 2](#)).

### *Second step: a needs-based approach versus a rights-based approach*

- The trainer and participants reflect on the differences between needs-based and rights-based approaches. Participants share their views, and the trainer presents the evolution from a needs-based to a rights-based approach, as summarised in Table 2.
- The trainer emphasises that UNCRC articles represent legal standards, obligating states to respect, safeguard, and fulfil all children's rights. The UNCRC, while a legal document, also serves as a guide for **guardians and service providers**. It is multidisciplinary, recognising that children's needs and rights are interrelated and indivisible. Effective implementation of the UNCRC requires collaboration among all relevant state actors and service providers.

**Table 2: Comparing a Needs-Based Approach with a Rights-Based Approach**

<b>NEEDS-BASED APPROACH</b>	<b>RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH</b>
The approach responds to a need.	The approach safeguards a right – in law or in practice.
Needs are not related to obligations of duty bearers.	Human rights are always connected to obligations of duty bearers.
Needs can be universal or individual.	Human rights are universal.
Needs can be understood according to a hierarchy and priority.	Human rights are indivisible, meaning one group of rights cannot be enjoyed without others.
Needs can be met through charity initiatives.	Human rights cannot be met through charity; they are connected to obligations of the state, as well as to parents', guardians', and private social welfare services' obligations, as outlined in the UNCRC.

Source: FRA (2022), based on Jonsson, U. (2003), *Human rights approach to development programming*, New York, United Nations Children's Fund.

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

**The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:**

- Recap the main insights and takeaways from the session, highlighting the key points discussed.
- Identify and record any unresolved issues or questions that did not reach a consensus among participants.
- Use the Guardianship Wheel to illustrate how this session ties into the thematic fields of future sessions in the training programme.
- Introduce the key theme for the upcoming training session.

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### Follow-Up Activities

- Ask participants to form a group of volunteers to prepare a summary of the current session. This group will present the recap at the next training session.

# Session 1.2: Risk and resilience of children: understanding vulnerability as a rights-based and empowering concept

*Guardianship Wheel level 2 : Risk and resilience of the child*

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## *Quotation from Child*

*“There’s this woman who comes to where I stay to talk to us kids. I don’t like her much because she always tells us how poor we are and how sorry she is for everything we went through to get here.”*

*“I prefer spending time with Cristina because she doesn’t treat me like everyone else. She encourages me and understands that I can do things! Sometimes we even try together to figure out who could help with a certain problem.”*

## *Quotation from Guardian*

*“The caretaker said that Juma is a tough guy, considering everything he’s been through on his journey, and that he can handle a lot, so they’re not worried about him. But I saw him crying.”*

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## A. Session overview

### Key Messages

- A person facing a risk is vulnerable to experiencing harm.
- Resilience helps a person deal with risk and avoid harm. Individuals with strong resilience are often better prepared to handle risks and are therefore considered less vulnerable.
- Resilience depends on a person's own resources and living situation, but it can also be strengthened by support from others and available services.
- The vulnerability of unaccompanied children is influenced by their life story, their migration status, their opportunities to exercise their rights and their access to support.
- State officials and service providers also influence the risk and resilience of children. How they identify and respond to children's risks, and the extent to which they can strengthen children's resilience, depends on their knowledge, skills, behaviours and attitudes.
- The guardian is an important figure who helps reduce the child's risks and strengthen their resilience. In this way, the guardian can help to reduce the child's vulnerability and prevent harm.

## Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, the participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

### **KNOW**

- Explain the concept and nature of vulnerability.
- Assess how the context influences the risk and resilience of unaccompanied children.

### **DO**

- Identify key actors and services that can help strengthen the child's resilience and reduce their risks.
- Reduce risks and strengthen the child's resilience from a children's rights perspective.

### **BE**

- Be sensitive to their own role, as well as the roles of other actors and services, in increasing or reducing the child's vulnerability.

## Preparation

### *Practical preparation*

- The trainer becomes familiar with the ecological and rights-based model of the unaccompanied child's vulnerability (see Figure 2, p33).
- During the training session, the trainer draws five concentric circles representing the ecological model on a flipchart. The circles include:
  1. The child (centre circle)
  2. The child's direct relations with family, peers, and friends
  3. The community and society
  4. The environment
  5. The relevant laws, policies, and services concerning the child
- The trainer writes key terms within the appropriate circles during the session, along with key words, comments, and questions raised by participants.

### *Thematic preparation*

- The trainer compiles key facts, definitions, and questions on the risks and resilience of unaccompanied children, considering the specific context of the country, city, or region where the training is taking place.
- If applicable, a trainer with relevant knowledge and expertise can provide the thematic introduction. Alternatively, a guest lecturer may be invited to present the introduction.

- The presentation on risk and resilience factors can reference the child's needs identified in the first training session.

### Guest Lectures

#### Key Points of Discussion

- **Risk and resilience of migrant, asylum-seeking, and refugee children in the host country:** Discuss the specific challenges these children face and explore examples of good practices in the country where the training is being conducted.
- **Risk and resilience along the migration route:** Examine the risks and resilience factors that affect migrant, asylum-seeking, and refugee children from their countries and regions of origin, during their journey, and upon arrival in the EU and the host country.

#### Possible invitees:

- A representative from service providers working with migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, such as those offering psycho-social support, healthcare and treatment, social services, child protection, outreach programs, or specialised community-based services.
- A representative from a specialised UN agency or an international, national, or local NGO involved in supporting migrant, asylum-seeking, and refugee children.

## Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 4:** Towards a rights-based understanding of vulnerability.
- **Handout 5:** Typical risk and resilience factors of unaccompanied children.

## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and Introduction to the Course

- Opening of the training programme and welcoming the participants.
- Recap of the previous session by a group of participants, and Introduction to the main theme of the session.

### 2. Biographical narrative exercise: Creating a personal connection with the thematic field

- Participants are asked to reflect on their own life stories. They should think of a time during childhood, adolescence, or adulthood when they faced a risk or difficult situation.
- The focus is on a moment when they received support from someone else to manage that risk or difficulty.
- Participants are asked to remember how they felt about the support they received.

- They express this feeling as a key word.

### 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the main themes and questions of the training session.
- Participants are informed that they will explore risk factors, obstacles, or barriers faced by unaccompanied children in the specific country, city, or region where the training takes place.
- The session will involve activities and joint reflection.
- Resilience factors and sources of protection and support for unaccompanied children will also be discussed.

### 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

- The trainer asks participants to reflect on risks that unaccompanied children face and sources of resilience that help them cope.
- Participants are instructed to identify one key word for risk factors and one for resilience factors or sources of protection.
- They write these key words on Post-it notes, using different colours for risks and resilience factors.
- Participants are given a few minutes to reflect and write down their key words.
- After writing, participants place their Post-it notes on concentric circles drawn on a flipchart by the trainer.
- The placement of Post-it notes on specific circles reflects what participants associate the risk or resilience factor with: the child, the child's environment, community, society, environment, or the state and its laws/policies.
- The trainer reads each key word aloud and invites the participant who wrote it to share their thoughts with the group.
- Participants discuss how specific risk or resilience factors in one circle relate to other circles.
- The discussion focuses on how various factors—such as the child's story, family, peers, community, society, and state policies—influence the child's risks and resilience (a protective environment).
- The trainer highlights the dynamic interactions and linkages across these circles, possibly drawing lines on the flipchart to illustrate connections.
- Additional comments are solicited from participants to ensure a comprehensive map of risk and resilience factors.
- The trainer encourages participants to consider factors related to hosting, experiences with the home community, and the journey of unaccompanied children.

## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

- The trainer concludes the session by referring to the concepts of vulnerability, risk, and resilience.

### *First Step: Typical stereotypes regarding the Vulnerability of Unaccompanied Children*

- Children, particularly unaccompanied children, are often considered "vulnerable" and in need of special protection.
- Vulnerability is typically understood in a disempowering sense, associated with weakness, destitution, or intimidation, leading to a need for help.
- This preconception might result in the assumption that children who appear strong, outspoken, and independent couldn't have experienced violence or exploitation and aren't at risk.
- These stereotypes can be misleading, preventing those interacting with the child from truly hearing their story and genuinely listening to what they say.

### *Second Step: Mitigating Vulnerability through Resilience*

- The term "vulnerability" has a different meaning in other disciplines, such as health and social protection, and can be understood as an empowering concept.
- It recognises that everyone can defend themselves against the harmful impact of specific risks. The capacity to mitigate a risk is called resilience.
- Everyone encounters risks during their lifetime. Whether these risks lead to harm depends on a person's resources, capacities, and access to support and remedial measures.
- When personal resources are insufficient to mitigate risk, access to support is vital.
- The trainer explains the concept of resilience, which, in physics, is understood as an object's or body's ability to resist external physical impact (and return to normal).
- In people, resilience refers to the ability to:
  - Cope with stress and risk factors.
  - Cope with disruptive change.
  - Cope with obstacles and barriers preventing them from meeting their needs or pursuing their life project.
  - Maintain positive characteristics.
  - Maintain positive relationships.
  - Continue constructing and advancing their life project.
- Vulnerability is an aggregate concept caused by risk and balanced by resilience. Risk and resilience interact dynamically, evolving as a child grows and develops their capacities.

- Risk and resilience change during a migration experience. *In a community that receives unaccompanied children, efforts to prevent vulnerabilities from resulting in harm aim to reduce risks while strengthening the resilience of the individual child and unaccompanied children as a group.*(hence a journey of life tool to assess risk, and resilience factors).

### **Third Step: An Ecological Understanding of Vulnerability**

- Risk and resilience determine vulnerability. They are dynamic and affect the child in various ways.
- This understanding is known as the "ecological model." The "ecology" of the child refers to all the child's social contacts and relationships, and their position in the family and community.
- It also encompasses broader social, economic, legal, and political issues, and their impact on the child's life and perspective.
- The child's personal risks and resilience may be connected to their physical, cognitive, and health situation, character, and life story. These are closely intertwined with risks and resilience arising from direct and indirect relationships, social contexts, and the child's environment according to the ecological model.
- As a result, a person's risks and resilience interact at multiple levels and accumulate.
- After introducing these concepts, the trainer distributes [Handout 4](#) and [Handout 5](#) to the participants.
- The trainer then returns to the graph on the flipchart with all the key words and comments. The trainer summarises the participants' discussion, using some of their key words indicating risk and resilience factors. They remind the group of the interaction between risks and resilience across the child's direct and indirect relationships (see Figure 2).
- If the group has identified risk and resilience factors not mentioned in [Handout 5](#), the trainer can invite participants to note these additional factors on the handout.
- If the group discussion has not identified some factors indicated on the handout, the trainer could use this opportunity to make participants aware of areas that remain unaddressed.



Figure 2: Risk and resilience influence the child's vulnerability and interact at different levels



Source: FRA (2022).

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#### Fourth Step: The Role of the Receiving Community in Reducing Vulnerability

- Narrating their life story can help a child process and reconcile adverse experiences, transforming these experiences into future perspectives. The receiving community can support this process by understanding and responding to the child's needs and interacting with them in a way that respects their rights. (*Quality relationships with at least one adult is vital for children's resilience*).
- The capacity of the receiving community to safeguard children's rights is essential in reducing vulnerability. This community must understand how the child's needs and rights relate and interact across all levels of their social relations.
- The trainer reiterates the four main dimensions of the UNCRC introduced in the first training session, which together contribute to reducing risks and strengthening the child's resilience.
- The trainer concludes by emphasising that the concepts of vulnerability, risk, and resilience—and how they are understood — affect how someone is perceived and treated.
- Understanding vulnerability from an ecological and rights-based perspective can help change attitudes and mindsets regarding unaccompanied children. They are seen not as disempowered individuals needing help, but as individuals with resources, potential, and coping skills who are self-efficient and contribute to the receiving community as active and competent people.

#### Fifth Step: The Role of the Guardian in Reducing Vulnerability

- The guardian can support the child, service providers, and the community in gaining a better understanding of the child's risks and resilience.

- Identifying and recognising risks allows the guardian and the receiving community to better mobilise the right support to mitigate these risks. These efforts are essential to preventing or reducing the harmful impact of risks and strengthening the child's resilience.
- The trainer could ask the following two questions to guide the concluding discussion with the participants:
  1. What can a guardian do to reduce the risks of an unaccompanied child?
  2. What can the guardian do to strengthen the resilience of the child?
- Participants discuss what they can do as guardians to influence the child's vulnerability, specifically how to help reduce and mitigate risks and strengthen the child's resilience.
- The trainer should note that the concept of vulnerability is used in EU law, including regarding victims of crime and people seeking international protection. A vulnerable person has special protection needs and requires targeted support. Children are recognised as an intrinsically vulnerable group.
- This recognition, combined with the obligation of Member States to provide special support and protection, is an important factor in the reception of unaccompanied children. It strengthens their rights and safeguards in many spheres of their life, including accommodation, assistance, representation, and procedural rights, which will be addressed in Modules 2 and 3.

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

### **The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:**

- Summarise the key points that participants and the trainer will take from this session.
- Note contentious issues and unresolved questions or topics where consensus was not reached.
- Use the Guardianship Wheel to connect this session with the thematic fields of other training sessions, including both previous and upcoming sessions.
- Announce the key theme of the next training session.

### **Follow-up Activities:**

The trainer asks participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and present it at the next training session.

# Session 1.3: Children on the move: migration experiences and life stories

Guardianship Wheel level 3: The child's migration story

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## Quotation from Child

*"I had to leave from one moment to the other. I did not even have time to tell my friends and say goodbye to my grandmother."*

*"When we are hanging out with the other boys we talk sometimes about going back home and what it could be like. I would like to go home and see my parents, my brothers and sister, and my friends, and walk again on the streets of my town, but I'm scared. Maybe things will change and sometimes in the future it could be safe for me to go back, even just for a visit."*

## Quotation from Guardian

*"When I read the case file of Theo, I was shocked at how much violence and bad things he had to go through, and this started in the place where he lived with his family and continued all the way along the journey, even in Europe. You would not believe this when you see him, he does not show it."*

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## A. Session overview

### Key Messages

- The UNCRRC affords unaccompanied migrant and asylum-seeking children the same rights as other children.
- Unaccompanied children face many risks, including risks of violence and exploitation. They face these at all stages of their migration: in home communities, during the journey, in transit and in the country of arrival.
- Understanding the child's migration experience is key to determining appropriate responses. This includes risks and sources of protection at all stages of the migration.
- Information about the child's living situation in the home community and experiences during the journey is important. It ensures that the support provided is meaningful and appropriate for the child, including in the light of the child's gender and culture and the situation in their country of origin.
- The guardian plays an important role in ensuring that state officials and service providers base their decisions on correct information about the child.

## Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, the participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

### KNOW

- Describe risk and resilience factors that shape a child's migration experience from home to their place of arrival.
- Identify individual push and pull factors driving children's migration and understand how these relate to broader, general push and pull factors.
- Recognise that children's life and migration stories are diverse and unique.

### DO

- Identify challenges and opportunities stemming from the child's background and migration story.
- Ensure that officials and professionals involved in decisions about the child are informed of the child's story and relevant migration details.
- Take action if decisions regarding the child are made without considering the child's story and views.
- Support the child in viewing their migration experience as a valuable resource for their development and evolving capacities.

### BE

- Be an active and attentive listener when the child shares their story.
- Be appreciative of the child's migration experience as a resource for their development and capacities.

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## Preparation

### Thematic preparation

- The trainer prepares the session by compiling key facts, definitions and questions on the migration experiences of children arriving in the country and/ or city or region where the training takes place. The preparatory work or expert's introduction helps the trainer to lead and guide the discussion with the participants.
- The presentation of background information about children's migration experiences can reference the child's rights and needs that the participants identified in previous training sessions.

### Guest Lectures

#### Key Points of Discussion

- **Facts and Figures on Migration:** Data and statistics on migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees arriving in the EU and the specific country where the training is conducted. Includes data on unaccompanied children.
- **Legal Framework:** Overview of the legal framework concerning unaccompanied migrant, asylum-seeking, and refugee children in the country where the training is held.
- **International Protection and Residence Procedures:** Information on international protection or residence permit procedures in the relevant country.

#### Possible Invitees to Be Considered

- **Representative from Service Providers:** Individuals from organisations working with migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees, such as those in healthcare, social services, child protection, outreach services, or specialised community-based organisations.
- **Representative from a Specialised UN Agency or NGO:** Representatives from international, national, or local NGOs, research institutes, or academia.

- **Organisation Representing Migrant Communities:** Representatives from organisations representing migrant communities and diaspora groups.

## Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 6:** Case Studies for Session 1.3
- **Handout 7:** Typical Push and Pull Factors for the Migration of Unaccompanied Children

## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and recap

- Opening of the training programme and welcoming the participants.
- Recap of the previous session by a group of participants, and Introduction to the main theme of the session.

### 2. Biographical narrative exercise: Creating a personal connection with the thematic field

- The trainer asks the participants to reflect on a direct or indirect story of migration in their lives.
- The trainer asks them to express the personal migration experience as a key word. This could relate to actual migration, travel or a metaphorical journey in terms of exploring new thematic areas or contacts, or a learning experience.
- The trainer asks the participants to share their key words with the group. They can comment on their word if they would like to do so.

### 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the main themes and questions that the training session will address, and tells participants that by carrying out the activities, and through joint reflection, they will explore the migration experiences of children who arrive unaccompanied in the country or city/region where the training is conducted. They will also cover how the child's experiences along the migration route are relevant to the child's present situation and perspectives for the future.

### 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the group work and divides the participants into groups.
- The trainer can choose to work with a single case study, or with some or all **case studies**. This will depend on the specific context of where the training takes place. The cases below are proposed as examples. They can be adapted to the national and/or local context.

The trainer distributes [Handout 6](#) and introduces the instructions for the group work.

- Imagine you are the guardian of the child described in the case study and respond to the following questions:
  - What are the main push and pull factors in the migration story of this child?
  - Can you identify push and pull factors from the case study, and factors that you may need to gather more information on as a guardian?
  - How do these push and pull factors influence the needs of the child?

The groups have about 15–20 minutes to read and discuss the case. After that, they report back to the plenary. The trainer moderates the discussion.

## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

### *First Step: Push and Pull Factors for the Migration of Children*

- The trainer points out that children’s migration takes place in a broader context of social, economic, and political factors. Understanding the broader context of children’s migration is essential for the guardian. It provides important background knowledge for the guardian’s role.
- The trainer facilitates a discussion with the participants to identify push and pull factors related to children’s migration and how these factors could be organised according to different social, economic, political, and environmental terms.
- The trainer may refer to [Handout 7](#) to guide this discussion. They could illustrate this discussion by drawing a table of factors on the flipchart (as in the handout) and filling the table with the key words and arguments provided by the participants.

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### *Second Step: Phases of Migration*

- Migration is a process that begins before leaving the country of origin. People who leave on a migration project often have previous migration experience. This is directly or indirectly connected with the ‘decision to leave’.
- Migration can be *voluntary*, that is, the person is motivated to leave and decides to do so, or *forced*, in that circumstances or the actions of third persons make migration essential. Sometimes a person who has already decided to leave also feels forced to do so – combining voluntary and forced motivations. The decision to leave and the emotions linked to migration vary in these three scenarios.

The trainer might share these reflections, introducing **the child’s life and migration story (Journey of Life)** in the following **main phases**:

- The child’s home situation
- The decision to leave or the circumstances that lead to the departure
- The departure
- The journey of the child
- The arrival in the country where the training takes place
- The child’s transfer or movement within the country of arrival

- The child’s current living situation
- The child’s perspectives and aspirations for the present and the future
- The child’s thoughts about their home and country of origin, including those about possible or actual return.

For more information, see FRA’s web page on the Guardianship Wheel.

- When introducing the migration process, the trainer might reiterate some key facts and figures from the session’s thematic introduction to this session, as well as key concepts, such as people needing protection, asylum, the status of asylum seekers and refugees, smuggling migrants and child trafficking. These concepts are based on the definitions afforded under international, EU, and national law (available on FRA’s e-learning platform).

### *Third Step: Risk and Resilience in the Child’s Migration Story*

- The trainer should emphasise that in each migration phase the child is part of a social environment that could offer protection and support, or present risks, obstacles, and barriers (and we need to understand these). Many children may have both positive and negative experiences of the social context and people they encounter. This is the case in all migration phases: leaving the home community; during the journey and arriving and settling in a new country.
- These positive and negative experiences, risks, and sources of resilience can affect the child even after they have arrived in the country where the training takes place, and indeed for life. Experiencing gender discrimination, for instance, can have an inhibiting and discouraging effect on the child that lasts into adulthood.
- Acts of violence in the home and during the journey can cause physical and emotional harm, mental health problems, disabilities, permanent health impairments, and trauma. The risk of permanent impairments and harm is particularly high when the reception and support systems in the country of arrival are not adequate to respond to the child’s individual needs.

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### *Fourth Step: Relevance of the Child’s Migration Story for the Guardian*

- The migration process must be understood in the light of the child’s story, aspirations, and life project. A multitude of subjective and objective aspects that determine the child’s life must also be considered.
- It is important for guardians to consider the child’s past, present, and future. Being aware of continuity in the child’s life and development helps to expand the focus from the ‘here and now’. This often dominates the first reception and response to unaccompanied children. Instead, they must adopt a longer-term perspective on the child’s development and transition to adulthood and independent life.
- It is particularly important for guardians to monitor if or how experiences and risks that a child has fled continue to affect them during the journey and in the country of arrival. The guardian’s actions, decisions, and attitudes importantly interrupt the continuity of negative experiences. This initiates a transition to more positive experiences for the child, combined with a real outlook for the future.
- The guardian should be aware of the child’s connections to the home and the community of origin, or where their family is, and the quality of the child’s relationship with their family members, as well as the child’s position in the home community and the overall social environment. This enables the guardian to better understand the dynamics and complexity of the child’s story.

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:

- Summarise the key points that participants and the trainer will take from this session.
- Note contentious issues and unresolved questions or topics where consensus was not reached.
- Use the Guardianship Wheel to connect this session with the thematic fields of other training sessions, including both previous and upcoming sessions.
- Announce the key theme of the next training session.

### **Follow-up Activities:**

The trainer asks participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and present it at the next training session.

### **Additional links to resources for the sessions :**

- Case study exercises Module 1 : [link](#)
- Presentations for Module 1 (with or without notes) : [link](#)
- Self-evaluation of learning outcomes Module 1 : [link](#)
- Glossary : [link](#)



# Module 2: GUARDIANSHIP IN THE BEST INTEREST OF THE CHILD

## Module Overview

- **Session 2.1: Creating an Effective Relationship Between Guardian and Child**
- **Session 2.2: The Mandate and Tasks of the Guardian**
- **Session 2.3: Promoting the Best Interests of the Child in Relation to State Authorities and Service Providers**

## Objectives of Module 2

- Module 2 builds on the theoretical and practical concepts introduced in Module 1. It aims to train guardians to apply these concepts in the context of their own mandates and in relation to other state authorities and service providers who are in contact with the child.
- The Module introduces specific tasks of the guardian. The trainer supports the participants in gaining confidence in the guardian's role and in their ability to act as an advocate for the child, promoting the rights and best interests of the child in their interactions with the relevant state agencies and services.
- Participants will learn to appreciate the complexity of the services that the unaccompanied child has to deal with and of the procedures to which they are subjected.
- They will obtain knowledge about referral mechanisms, reporting obligations, rules of confidentiality, and data protection.
- In this Module, the training sensitises guardians to the importance of adjusting behaviour and communication to the child's specific situation and background.

## Overall Learning Outcomes

- **2.1.** Understand how the principle of the best interests of the child can guide guardianship services.
- **2.2.** Describe the tasks and duties of the guardian and gain confidence in exercising the role of a guardian.
- **2.3.** Become familiar with the key concepts describing the professional and personal relationship of the guardian and the child.
- **2.4.** Describe the concept of a referral mechanism for children, with its main actors and services, including formal and informal actors who provide support to a child.
- **2.5.** Be prepared to activate the referral mechanism for the unaccompanied child in accordance with the child's needs and rights.
- **2.6.** Comprehend the complexity of the services and procedures concerning the unaccompanied child.

# Session 2.1: Creating an effective relationship between guardian and child

*Guardianship Wheel Level 4: Age and evolving capacities of the child*

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## *Quotation from Child*

*“At the beginning, I was thinking she was one of the many social workers asking about my story. After we spent a day together in the countryside, I realised I could open up with her.”*

*“Sometimes we laugh together, in other occasion we do serious things like working on my CV.”*

## *Quotation from Guardian*

*“Before being a guardian, I thought to know what an adolescent needs. After knowing Ali better I realised that many of my ideas were not applicable and I had to change and widen my perspective.”*

*“On many occasions, I got upset because he was not doing what we decided together. Now things are improving, and I understood better that things are working when they make sense for him.”*

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## A. Session overview

### Key Messages

- Competent, responsible and caring adults are important to children and can act as role models.
- The child’s relationship with the guardian will be influenced by their previous experiences with adults, including community members, service providers and state officials. These experiences may occur in the child’s home, during the journey or in the receiving community.
- The ages, genders, cultural backgrounds and life stories of the child and the guardian influence their professional and personal relationship.
- Open dialogue and active listening can help the guardian and the child to build trust and an effective relationship.
- The child has a right to access information, communication and support. These must be adapted to the child’s age and evolving capacities, language, culture and experiences.

## Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, the participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

### KNOW

- Explain the importance of an adult for the child's development and as a point of reference.
- Differentiate the roles of parents, professional caregivers, social workers, and guardians in relation to an unaccompanied child.

### DO

- Relate to the child ethically and humanely, considering how the child's gender, culture, language, and life story influence their evolving capacities.
- Act with confidence and build a trusting relationship with the child.
- Adapt communication to the age and evolving capacities of the child.

### BE

- Be prepared to act as an adult point of reference for a child.
- Be sensitive to the child's needs in light of their age, gender, and cultural and linguistic background and experiences.

## Preparation

### Thematic preparation

- The team of trainers (or trainer) prepare the session's thematic introduction. They compile the main facts, definitions and questions relevant to the training session's theme. In particular, they gather applicable laws and regulations in the country and/or city or region where the training takes place. These provide for different age limits and minimum age requirements, and determine children's rights, entitlements, and *responsibilities*. To that effect the national capacity reports, matrixes and desk reviews are useful.
- The presentation of the different statutory ages and the related rights and entitlements can reference the child's rights and needs. It can also reference the risk and resilience factors that the participants identified in previous training sessions.

Different age limits and minimum ages defined in national law could relate to the following: (preparation for the training of participants)

- Compulsory schooling;
- Minimum age for being employed and regulations concerning the work and employment of children at different ages;
- Right to be heard in administrative and judicial proceedings, for instance in relation to family law, alternative care placements, asylum proceedings, and criminal proceedings;
- Right to give informed consent to medical treatment;
- Age of sexual consent;
- Minimum age for marriage;
- Age of criminal responsibility.

## Guest Lectures

### KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- Introduction to principles of child-sensitive communication, practical guidance, and specific working methods for:
  - Leading a sensitive conversation with a child, including conversations about violence, exploitation, and trauma;
  - Conveying child-friendly information to migrant children, including delivering both good and bad news;
  - Communicating and interacting with children affected by trauma;
  - Handling children's challenging behaviors, such as aggression.
- Introduction to the role of interpreters and cultural mediators, and how to work with them effectively.

### POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED

- A professional with a background in child development, child psychiatry, or psychology.
- A professional with experience in communicating with children, interviewing children from different backgrounds, and conducting (forensic) interviews with children.
- A cultural mediator with experience of working with unaccompanied children.
- A representative of the national, regional, or local authority responsible for guardianship services, an experienced guardian, or a representative of a guardians' association or network.

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## Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and recap

- Opening of the training programme and welcoming the participants.
- Recap of the previous session by a group of participants, and Introduction to the main theme of the session.

### 2. Biographical narrative exercise: Creating a personal connection with the thematic field

- The trainer asks the participants to reflect on their own life stories.
- The participants think of a personal relationship that was important when resolving an issue during their childhood or adolescence. This could be a relationship with a family or household member, someone in their community, a friend or a stranger.
- The trainer asks participants to identify a word that describes their relationship with this person.
- The trainer asks if some of the participants would like to share their thoughts with the group. They can explain why they chose the key word and describe their relationship with the person.

### 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the main themes and questions that the training session will address, and tells participants that by carrying out the activities, and through joint reflection, *they will explore how adults and supporting people are important in every child's life. They will also explore how a competent, responsible and caring adult can make a difference in an unaccompanied child's life.*

### 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

#### *First step: mapping situations where children need the support of an adult*

- The trainer draws **Figure 3 needs model** (from previous session) on a flipchart, representing the four main dimensions of the UNCRC (see Annex 1, Methodology Note 1). They remind participants of the model introduced in the first training session.
- The trainer asks participants to imagine a child who lives in their community. This can be a girl or a boy, and of any age or family background. The trainer asks participants the following questions:
  - Can you think of *situations in which this child needs support from an adult?*
  - What situations come to your mind? Think of everyday life and exceptional situations.
- As the participants respond to the questions, the trainer notes key words summarising their responses on the flipchart. The trainer asks participants to indicate which of the four dimensions is most appropriate for each key word.
- Key words are allocated in line with the ecological model introduced in Session 1.2 (see **Figure 2 socio-eco model**):
  - Key words that are most relevant to the **child's personal and immediate context**, such as preparing healthy meals or providing care, are placed close to the center of the concentric circles.
  - Key words that relate to **the community and society**, for instance arranging the child's transportation to a friend's birthday party or helping find a suitable sports club, are placed in the middle circles.
  - Key words relating to the **state sphere, state services, and legal, administrative or judicial matters** are placed in the outer circles. This might include, for instance, renewing the child's identity card or registering the child at school.
- The flipchart is now covered with key words and the discussion ends. The trainer then asks participants to identify who is responsible for supporting the child in each of the above areas. Participants will most likely identify the parents as the most significant adults for children in their communities. However, some children will have foster parents or adoptive parents, or professional caregivers. When children are involved in administrative or judicial proceedings, guardians and representatives or lawyers may be involved. Participants might also mention extended family members, neighbors, and the parents of the child's best friend as important adults.
- While participants think about those who are responsible for ensuring the different needs of the child are met, the trainer notes key words on the flipchart.
- To conclude this exercise, the trainer engages the participants in a group reflection. This focuses on the multifaceted drawing that they created on the flipchart. The concluding discussion aims to sensitise

the participants to the support network of competent, responsible, and caring adults on which a child in their community can count.

### *Second step: mapping adults responsible for supporting an unaccompanied child*

After this discussion, the trainer asks the participants to reflect on **how the situation would be different if the child was unaccompanied**:

- Who is there to respond to these needs when the child is unaccompanied?
- Who is responsible for ensuring that their needs are met?

The trainer divides the participants into three or four groups and asks each group to respond to these questions. The groups have 10–15 minutes to brainstorm and then report back to the plenary.

## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

The trainer and participants summarise the support network of competent, responsible, and caring adults who care for a child.

### *First step: support networks for unaccompanied children: differences between home and hosting community*

- The trainer asks participants to remember that the unaccompanied children used to have **the same network of support as local children in the hosting community**, a network made up of important adults, peers, family members, and other members of their home communities. These adults, or some of them, may still be there for the child. However, they can exercise their supportive roles only from a distance. (**Refer to JoL tool and handouts in Module 5**)
- In the receiving community, the child may have the same need for supportive adults as other children. They may also have other specific needs/obligations. These relate to language and culture, regularisation of status, asylum or immigration, accommodation, and a range of procedures involving the child.

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### *Second step: the guardian's role in ensuring support for the child*

- The concluding discussion aims to raise participants' awareness of the main adults in an unaccompanied child's life. It also aims to alert them to the importance of guardians knowing who is responsible or available to perform important functions for the child. The guardian needs to be aware of all the areas in which an unaccompanied child requires support from an adult, even though the guardian is not responsible for all of them.
- Guardians must understand that parents, professional caretakers, social workers, and guardians have different roles and responsibilities regarding unaccompanied children. The guardian is in a good position to watch over the child's needs. They can note how the needs are met by different actors, and whether the responses are appropriate and effective.
- The guardian has to ask for action when it is missing. The guardian, therefore, plays an important role in planning, supervising, monitoring, and finding responses to the child's needs. (**See case management Handout 31**).
- A guardian may also need to be prepared to explain their role to the child and to other service providers. They may have to explain how it differs from those of the child's parents, professional caregivers, or social workers. If specific mandates and the division of tasks are unclear, guardians may be confronted with other actors' questions, critique, and doubts. Clarifying the differences

between these individuals and their roles is, therefore, essential if all actors are to collaborate confidently and complement each other.

- The trainer announces that questions about support services for unaccompanied children and the referral mechanism will be addressed in upcoming training sessions.

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:

- Summarise the key points that participants and the trainer will take from this session.
- Note contentious issues and unresolved questions or topics where consensus was not reached.
- Use the Guardianship Wheel to connect this session with the thematic fields of other training sessions, including both previous and upcoming sessions.
- Announce the key theme of the next training session.

### *Follow-up Activities:*

The trainer asks participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and present it at the next training session.

# Session 2.2: The mandate and tasks of the guardian

## Guardianship Wheel Level 5: Mandate and tasks of the guardian

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### Quotation from Child

*“My guardian knows things that I don’t know. She is a very gentle person, but I’ve been happy when she firmly explained to the shelter that I was not interested in becoming a baker.”*

*“I was shy to explain the problems with my skin irritation. She explained things and we went to the doctor together. Now I feel well.”*

### Quotation from Guardian

*“Things about my function became gradually clearer when I realised that I had to listen more to his point of view on the situation.”*

*“When I started, I was trying to understand everything about the law, and it was very difficult because I was unsure about the right thing to do. It was good to get help from a specialised lawyer – things became clearer.”*

*“You have to consider many aspects, how they relate to each other and how they make sense for Rosie’s experience and desires.”*

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## A. Session overview

### Key Messages

- EU law and national legislation regulate the roles and responsibilities of a guardian and a legal representative. International and EU organisations and institutions provide additional guidance.
- The guardian’s task is to promote the rights and best interests of the child. They must do so while keeping the child’s individual needs and life story in mind.
- The guardian has to comply with the national regulations defining their mandate. The principles and rights afforded under the UNCRC and other international and EU standards are also important references for guardians. These can guide guardians in exercising their role.
- Guardians require a diverse set of skills and knowledge to carry out their tasks. The rights of the child must orient their attitude.
- Guardians are part of a broader network of institutions, service providers, and community members who work with and support the child.



## Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, the participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

### **KNOW**

- Describe the mandate and tasks of the guardian, in accordance with national law and international standards.
- Explain how much the guardian's mandate in their country complies with EU law, and international and EU standards.

### **DO**

- Act naturally and with confidence when carrying out tasks.
- Relate to the child, other community actors, service providers, and state officials as a competent guardian.
- Exercise the guardian's role in accordance with the UNCRC.

### **BE**

- Be open to the guidance that national, international, and European sources offer guardians.
- Be aware of the limitations of the guardian's tasks.

## Preparation

### *Thematic preparation*

- The team of trainers prepares the thematic introduction to the session. They compile the main facts, definitions, and questions relevant to the training session's theme.
- In particular, they identify the applicable laws in the country and/or city or region where the training takes place. These regulate the mandate of guardians of unaccompanied children, including specific tasks and duties. They also identify any specific regulations at regional or local level, or existing guidelines.

### *Guest Lectures*

#### **KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION**

- Introduction to the mandate and tasks of a guardian in the country where the training is conducted.
- Experiences and lessons learned: practical tips from an experienced guardian or a guardianship association.

#### **POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED**

- A representative from the national guardianship authority, where applicable, or a representative from a comparable institution or organisation responsible for managing and supervising guardianship services for unaccompanied children.
- An experienced guardian or a representative of an association or network of guardians.

## Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 8:** European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights – guidance on the role and responsibilities of guardians of unaccompanied children:
- **Handout 9:** Committee on the Rights of the Child – guidance on the role and responsibilities of guardians of unaccompanied children:
- **Handout 10:** Council of Europe – guidance on the role and responsibilities of guardians of unaccompanied children :
- **Handout 11:** International non-governmental organisations – guidance on the role and responsibilities of guardians of unaccompanied children :
- **Handout 12:** Summary of international and European guidance on the role and responsibilities of guardians of unaccompanied children:

## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and recap

- Opening of the training programme and welcoming the participants.
- Recap of the previous session by a group of participants, and Introduction to the main theme of the session.

### 2. Biographical narrative exercise: Creating a personal connection with the thematic field

- The trainer asks participants to reflect on the meaning of trust in a personal or professional relationship and to come up with a key word for a behaviour, skill, or competence that helps build and maintain trust in this relationship.
- The trainer asks the participants to share their key words with the group. They can comment on their key word if and how they wish.
- It can be worth unpacking and delving quite a bit on the question of trust as it contains a lot of nuances, paradoxes and dilemmas important to the role of guardian.
  - Eg one example that comes back is that there is a “‘market’ for asylum seeking narratives”

### 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the main themes and questions that the training session will address, and tells participants that by carrying out the activities, and through joint reflection, they will explore how different international and European actors define the mandate of guardians of unaccompanied children.
- They will also explore how it is regulated in the country, region, or city where the training takes place.

## 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

### *First step: international and European guidance on the role and responsibilities of guardians*

- The trainer divides the participants into four groups. Each group receives a handout representing an international or European organisation or institution's guidance for guardianship services (see [Handouts 8–10](#)).
- The trainer asks the four groups to describe the role and responsibilities of a guardian using their handouts. They compile a list of key points on a flipchart. The groups work for about 25 minutes.
- After this exercise, the groups report back to the plenary. They present the key points they identified concerning the guardian's role and responsibilities. The four flipcharts of the groups are lined up next to each other so that the groups can compare them.
- Next, the trainer guides the group discussion to identify areas where some or all sets of guidance coincide. They also identify the differences between them. During this discussion, the trainer notes these observations on a new flipchart.
- When this comparative analysis is exhausted, the trainer asks the participants if any issues are missing and should be added. The trainer concludes by saying that this new merged list describing the guardian's role and responsibilities represents a comprehensive guide for guardians of unaccompanied children. The guide is rooted in international and EU standards and recommendations.

### *Second step: national regulations concerning the role and responsibilities of guardians in comparison with international and EU standards*

- The trainer shares with participants the provisions established under national law (see [Handouts 8–12](#)) and any other national regulation, policy, or guidance document available for guardians. The trainer provides a summary overview of the key points derived from national law. Participants have a few minutes to read the handout summarising national laws and regulations.
- The trainer leads a group discussion with the participants. The discussion aims to identify the synergies and differences between the national and the international standards guiding guardianship services. The discussion makes participants aware of the opportunities provided by international and EU standards, guidance, and recommendations.
- In the discussion, the trainer and participants explore the extent to which guardians can abide by European and international standards in their local and national contexts. They discuss the following questions:
  - How could a guardian benefit from European and international standards guiding them when exercising their mandate, as defined in the national and local contexts?
  - Could a guardian get into trouble if they abide by European and international standards in addition to the national regulations?
- *The purpose of this exercise is to explore how flexible the guardian's mandate is in the national or local context.* Participants also explore if guardianship services can benefit from international and European guidance while respecting national law.

- The trainer distributes [Handout 12](#) to participants as a reference document. This handout gives an overview of EU standards regulating the mandate of a guardian. Participants can continue to refer to this when working as a guardian.
- **N.B.** we have a comprehensive 12 pager ToR for the guardianship role that the Belgian authorities has develop that we can discuss during our initial ToT.

## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

### *First step: knowledge, skills and attitudes of guardians*

- The trainer leads a discussion with the participants to explore what knowledge, skills, and attitudes would usefully support the guardian in fulfilling their mandate.
- The trainer invites the participants to brainstorm openly in the plenary. Comments and observations are noted on a flipchart, and responses are prompted through questions if necessary.
- When the group reflection ends, the trainer invites participants to assess their strengths and possible weaknesses in light of their personal capacities and life stories.
- Participants are not required to share their thoughts, although those who wish to do so are welcome.

### *Second step: understanding the role of the guardian*

- The trainer concludes the session by reminding participants that guardians carry out their roles and responsibilities in various ways.
- It is crucial for guardians to gain a sense of confidence about their role and the associated activities and tasks.
- The rights and best interests of the child provide an overall framework. However, each guardian operates based on their own resources, capacities, and support networks.
- It is important to consider both the child and the guardian as individuals with their own stories, needs, skills, capacities, and competencies.
- Understanding their own mandate and responsibilities helps guardians set limits on their actions with and for the child. The guardian's role, while overlapping with that of a parent or caregiver, is distinct.
- This is the essential basis on which guardians exercise their important function: promoting the child's best interests in all matters concerning the child.
- The guardian is also part of a broader network that includes other guardians, the institutional framework, the child's parents and caregivers, the community, and service providers.
- The child's important reference people may be found in the hosting community, the community of origin, or the diaspora community. These groups can offer significant support to the guardian. It is important for each guardian to establish a working relationship with them, as well as with the child.  
*Hence the importance of the JoL exercise.*

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:

- Summarise the key points that participants and the trainer will take from this session.
- Note contentious issues and unresolved questions or topics where consensus was not reached.
- Use the Guardianship Wheel to connect this session with the thematic fields of other training sessions, including both previous and upcoming sessions.
- Announce the key theme of the next training session.

### **Follow-up Activities:**

The trainer asks participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and present it at the next training session.

# Session 2.3: Promoting the best interests of the child in relation to state authorities and service providers

## Guardianship Wheel Level 5: Mandate and tasks of the guardian

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### Quotation from Child

*“Sometimes, we try together to understand what is the best thing to do. The system is difficult and not always words correspond with reality.”*

*“I couldn’t sleep, always thinking about my documents. At the end, we solved the situation and now I feel more relaxed.”*

*“Tina is doing what my mum would do if she was here.”*

### Quotation from Guardian

*“For the first time, I realised that it was necessary for me to take a strong position to find a solution. It was not easy for me, I’m a rather shy person, but at the end I did it.”*

*“Sometimes is difficult to cooperate with the authorities, but I had to find a way, and in the system, you can find also persons who really care.”*

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## A. Session overview

### Key Messages

- Many state actors and private service providers are in contact with the unaccompanied child from the moment of arrival until a durable solution is identified and implemented.
- The guardian supports the child in their interaction with each and all of these actors, always focusing on safeguarding the rights and promoting the best interests of the child.
- The guardian must maintain an independent and impartial role when interacting with different state authorities and service providers, guided primarily by the best interests of the child.

### Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, the participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

**KNOW**

- Identify the actors and services of the national and local referral mechanisms, their specific mandates, and what they mean for the unaccompanied child.
- Identify the relevant reporting and complaints mechanisms to follow up on infringements of the child's rights or professional misconduct of state actors and service providers.
- Describe the decision-making processes and procedures involving an unaccompanied child.

**DO**

- Obtain the contact details of all state authorities and service providers involved with the child and meet with these people regularly.
- Advocate for the child's rights with state actors, private service providers, and individuals with whom the child is in contact.
- Act independently and impartially, guided primarily by the rights and best interests of the child.

**BE**

- Be confident in acting as a link between the child and the relevant state and private actors working with them.
- Be positioned to defend the child's rights and best interests, even when the reception system poses obstacles and barriers.

## Preparation

### Thematic preparation

- The trainers prepare the thematic introduction to the session. They compile the main facts, definitions, and questions relevant to the training session's theme. **In particular, they map the referral mechanism** for unaccompanied children in the country and/or at the local/regional level. They also **list the relevant actors, services, and regulations of which a guardian should be aware.**
- For this purpose, the trainer identifies relevant state authorities, service providers, and community-based services, institutions, or organisations that provide services for unaccompanied children in the country, region, and/or city where the training takes place, such as:
  - Accommodation
  - Food and nutrition, basic subsistence
  - Social welfare and protection
  - Healthcare and medical treatment, including sexual and reproductive health
  - Psycho-social support (well-being approach VS purely clinical, psychopathological)
  - Language training
  - Education
  - Basic administrative issues, such as registration, identity documents, and permits
  - Immigration and asylum proceedings
  - Vocational training, work, and employment
  - Legal assistance, representation, and legal aid

- Interpretation services
- Leisure time, sports, recreation, and play
- Specialised counseling and assistance services
- Substance abuse treatment and prevention
- Cultural activities
- Introduction to religious groups
- Introduction to diaspora groups
- Law enforcement
- Based on this mapping, the trainer prepares **Handout 13b** :  
This maps the national and, where applicable, local referral mechanisms for unaccompanied children. The list should be as detailed as possible, including contact details, contact people, and opening hours, where applicable. This could be achieved in different ways:
  - Trainers sufficiently familiar with the national and local referral mechanisms prepare the handout before the session.
  - Alternatively, a local guest lecturer could provide this map. They should be knowledgeable enough to introduce the existing local, regional, and national state authorities, service providers, and community-based services.
  - Where appropriate, the trainer can draw up this map with the participants. Alternatively, they can assign it as group work to be completed outside the training hours. Groups of four or five participants can collaborate to identify the relevant actors.

### Guest Lectures

#### KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- Introduction to social workers' role: role and meaning of the best interests of the child in national social and child protection services
- The child's rights and best interests in cross-border situations: considerations and safeguards for working with migrant, asylum-seeking, and refugee children

#### POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED

- A social worker or child protection worker with experience conducting best interests determinations for children in the hosting community
- An experienced guardian or a representative of an association or network of guardians

### Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 13:** Case studies for Session 2.3 :
- **Handout 13b:** The trainer prepares an additional handout 13b, as described in Thematic preparation above.



## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and recap

- Opening of the training session and welcoming the participants.
- Recap of the previous session by a group of participants.
- Introduction of the main theme of the session.

### 2. Biographical narrative exercise: Creating a personal connection with the thematic field

- The trainer asks the participants to reflect on a time when they used or received a service from a public or private service provider, whether in their community or another city or country. This could be a healthcare, educational, social, or other service.
- Participants describe the service using a key word and identify a positive or negative aspect of this service.
- Participants share their key words with the group, with the option to comment on their key word if desired.

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### 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the main themes and questions that the training session will address. Participants will explore the public and private services available to unaccompanied children in the country, region, or city where the training takes place.
- Participants will also explore how these services interact with the child and the guardian.

**N.B Here you have an opportunity to brainstorm, and trouble shoot issues that will emerge in the conversation later in terms of perception of service provision, challenges that there is in providing service and finding innovative ways to provide for service e.g. Mental Health is a classic example.**

### 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

#### *First Step: Introduction to the Group Work*

- The trainer divides participants into four groups, each receiving a case study.
- Groups assume the role of the guardian of the child described in the case study and identify responses to the following questions:
  - What type of support does this child need?
  - Which actors are responsible or available to provide this support?
  - Can support be considered in relation to the four dimensions of the child's needs and rights: primary needs, development, participation, and protection (see Annex 1, Methodology Note 1, Figure 3)?

- Group work is scheduled for 30 minutes, followed by presentations to the plenary.

### Second Step: Identifying Support Actors in the Local Context

- After the groups have presented their work, the trainer engages the participants in a discussion with the aim of determining areas where the identified needs are not met.
- In this exercise, the trainer works with the UNCRC as a *guide for the case assessment and analysis*. To visualise this, the trainer draws *Figure 3 (the four dimensions model)* on the flipchart, recalling how it was used in previous training sessions. The trainer reminds participants that guardians can use the UNCRC as a comprehensive guide for analysing the child's needs and rights but should always consider the child's individual story.
- The trainer distributes *Handout 13b service map* (we can call it handout 13b), which was prepared prior to the session. This handout covers the national and/or local referral mechanisms for unaccompanied children. The trainer guides participants through the handout. The aim is to determine if all the relevant actors identified in their groups are represented and accessible through national and/or local referral mechanisms for children, or if any are missing.
- During the discussion, the trainer notes each actor identified as present or absent on the flipchart, using different colours. Each actor is allocated to the dimension that participants consider the most suitable. Reviewing the handout also helps to assess if the group work overlooked any available actors.

### Third Step: The Role of the Guardian

- The trainer explains that the guardian has a very specific role. They are attentive to the child's personal matters, social relationships, and direct social environment.
- Guardians must also be aware of broader social, economic, and political questions, such as attitudes and stereotypes concerning migrants and asylum seekers arriving in the country where the training takes place. Guardians should be aware of media reports, the availability of state funding for accommodation and other services for unaccompanied children, and the efficiency of the state system in complying with national and EU laws concerning the reception of unaccompanied children.
- The trainer illustrates these levels in line with the concentric circles of the ecological system introduced in *Session 1.2* (see *Figure 2*).
- The trainer points out that *participants may find themselves in challenging and difficult situations as guardians. Sometimes the child's needs are not identified, recognised, or met by the hosting context.* The child's status as an unaccompanied migrant, asylum-seeking, or refugee child may create these difficulties. Alternatively, they may be attributable to third persons or bureaucracy, entrenched attitudes or mindsets, and inadequate or inefficient communication with the child.
- State authorities and service providers base their work on information about the child that they consider the truth. Guardians may find that this information does not always coincide with what the child shares, generating doubts and concerns. Guardians may struggle to position themselves in relation to both the child and the state authorities.
- A guardian may learn sensitive information about the child that the child withholds from state authorities or service providers. In such situations, the guardian needs to reflect on how to handle this information responsibly. They must also act in accordance with the principle of the best interests of the child.

## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

The trainer concludes the session with a discussion of the concepts of the impartiality and independence of the guardian.

### *First Step: Seeking Orientation in Difficult Situations*

- The trainer recalls difficult situations and decisions identified in the group work.
- Participants are asked how a guardian can determine what is right or wrong when supporting a child.
- Discussion includes where a guardian can seek orientation.
- The UNCRC is identified as a guide for assessing the child's case and analysing the situation.
- The child's story is also emphasised as a crucial source of information.
- Participants discuss how this orientation helps address critical questions and difficulties identified in the group work.

### *Second Step: Understanding the Independence and Impartiality of the Guardian*

- Participants are asked what impartiality and independence of the guardian mean.
  - From whom should a guardian be independent?
  - Is a guardian allowed to take sides with any particular actor, such as the child's care staff, social worker, teacher, police, or immigration officer? (**N.B.** concepts of triangulation, intermediary, buffer, and scaffolding)
- The discussion is guided towards understanding that the guardian should be primarily guided by the child's rights and best interests.
- The independence and impartiality of the guardian's role depend on the guardian's capability and willingness to defend the child's interests and rights, especially when the system fails to meet these needs.
- The trainer explains that the guardian must act as a link between the child and the services and state authorities, particularly in contexts where there are obstacles to safeguarding the child's rights.
- Guardians are viewed as human rights vectors in these situations.
- Each guardian exercises their role differently due to varying capacities, skills, knowledge, life stories, experiences, and support networks.
- Guardians operate within the framework defined by national laws and regulations, guided by EU and international standards on the rights of the child.
- The national guardianship system accommodates and values the individuality and diversity of guardians.
- Guardians need to feel confident and comfortable in their role and know where to seek advice and expertise for specific situations.

- Participants are informed that these matters will be explored in more detail in subsequent sessions.

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:

- Summarise the key points that participants and the trainer will take from this session.
- Note contentious issues and unresolved questions or topics where consensus was not reached.
- Use the Guardianship Wheel to connect this session with the thematic fields of other training sessions, including both previous and upcoming sessions.
- Announce the key theme of the next training session.

### **Follow-up Activities:**

The trainer asks participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and present it at the next training session.

### **Additional links to resources for the sessions :**

- Case study exercises Module 2 : [link](#)
- Presentations for Module 2 (with or without notes) : [link](#)
- Self-evaluation of learning outcomes Module 2 : [link](#)
- Glossary : [link](#)

# Module 3: SUPPORTING THE CHILD FROM ARRIVAL TO DURABLE SOLUTION

## Module Overview

**Session 3.1: From Arrival to Durable Solution: Identifying and Responding to the Child's Needs**

**Session 3.2: From Arrival to Durable Solution: Promoting the Best Interests of the Child in Decisions and Proceedings**

## Objectives of Module 3

Module 3 focuses on different processes that an unaccompanied child might experience, from their arrival in a country through to the identification and implementation of a durable solution. For an unaccompanied child, the phases of assessments, decisions, and procedures in this Module are not necessarily chronological. They may be consecutive, but they may just as easily overlap or be simultaneous. Some of the phases might not be relevant to a child. Some may be missed out or come in at a later stage in the child's reception process.

*The objectives of the sessions in this Module are to:*

- **Understand Relevance:** Enable participants to understand the relevance of the different assessments and decision-making processes needed to correctly identify the child's needs and provide appropriate services.
- **Explore Impact:** Explore how these procedures affect the child's well-being, safety, development, and future perspectives.
- **Guardian's Role:** Convey an understanding of the guardian's role in relation to state officials and service providers. The guardian does not require in-depth technical expertise but must be skilled and proactive in mobilising professional expertise and monitoring the performance of officials and service providers.
- **Child-Sensitive Communication:** Emphasise the importance of child-sensitive communication, ensuring that the child's experiences inform service provision and decisions.
- **Quality Monitoring:** Gain confidence in monitoring the quality of formal case assessments and decision-making processes.
- **Procedural Safeguards:** Clarify the guardian's role in promoting the child's best interests in proceedings and introduce procedural safeguards that ensure these interests are considered in administrative and judicial proceedings.

At this advanced stage of the training programme, participants are engaged more proactively. They are tasked with forming small groups to prepare and deliver presentations based on handouts, which helps develop skills in gathering, summarising, and presenting information. These skills are essential for effective guardianship.

## Overall Learning Outcomes

- **3.1 Guardian's Role:** Understand the guardian's role in different phases of the identification, reception, and referral of unaccompanied children.
- **3.2 Procedural Safeguards:** Get to know the procedural safeguards in administrative and judicial proceedings involving children.
- **3.3 Sensitive Conversations:** Develop skills in leading sensitive conversations with children.
- **3.4 Promoting Best Interests:** Gain confidence in promoting the best interests of the child in formal decision-making and procedures.
- **3.5 Special Needs:** Gain knowledge regarding identifying and responding to the special needs of an unaccompanied child, within the guardian's mandate.
- **3.6 Mobilising Support:** Be prepared to mobilise specialised support for the unaccompanied child.
- **3.7 Information Presentation:** Gain confidence in gathering, summarising, and presenting information about specific themes to a group.

# Session 3.1: From arrival to durable solution: identifying and responding to the child's needs

*Guardianship Wheel Level 6: Promoting the rights and best interests of the child*

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## *Quotation from Child*

*"I didn't feel comfortable telling things about myself. I realised over time that I could trust Maria and started talking to her as if she was one of my family."*

*"Even when I spoke the language, sometimes I couldn't understand what was going on and why they wouldn't release the documents. I spent entire nights without sleep."*

## *Quotation from Guardian*

*"When I did the training, I was worried but also quite confident, then I really understood things by getting to know Walid better."*

*"I couldn't get the social worker to understand how important it was to recognise Erie's capacities. Eventually I did, but it took a long time."*

*"I felt treated badly by the officer and thought how much kids could suffer from the same kind of attitude."*

*"Fortunately, we established a good relationship with the lawyer who helped us with the procedures for obtaining residence documents."*

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## **A. Session overview**

### **Key Messages**

- Unaccompanied children may have special needs that require targeted support services.
- The special needs of an unaccompanied child may be related to their age, separation from their families, experiences in their home country, during migration, and after arrival.
- Support services are essential to protect the child from harm and enable their participation in proceedings concerning them.
- The child has a right to receive support services that account for their special needs.

- Speaking about special needs can be sensitive and difficult for the child, the guardian, and all other actors involved.
- Adapting communication to the needs of the child is essential for identifying special needs. Considerations must include language, culture, age, gender, health, and possible experiences of violence.
- A trusted working relationship with the child is required to ensure the correct identification of special needs.
- The guardian has a key role in ensuring that competent authorities and service providers identify and respond to the child's special needs.
- Unaccompanied children may be asked to tell their stories repeatedly when questioned by different state authorities and service providers. Their narration may vary depending on the interview setting and the interests and needs of the person asking.
- Repeated interviewing and hearing of unaccompanied children can be stressful and re-traumatising for the child. This is especially true for children who are victims of violence and exploitation. It should be avoided as far as possible.
- The guardian may have a different understanding of the child's story than other service providers. The guardian must handle the child's information responsibly, in line with their mandate to promote the child's rights and best interests.

## Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, the participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

### KNOW

- **Identify** the range of special needs of unaccompanied children.
- **Explain** how unmet special needs may negatively impact the child's health, well-being, development, and cooperation with state authorities and service providers.
- **Describe** working methods and tools that a guardian and other service providers can use to identify, assess, and respond to the child's special needs.

### DO

- **Hear** what the child says.
- **Identify** specific risks and needs through meaningful interaction with the child.
- **Refer** the child to appropriate services.

### BE

- **Be** an active listener.
- **Be** sensitive to signs and hints that could point to special needs of an unaccompanied child

## Preparation

### Thematic preparation

- The team of trainers prepare the thematic introduction to the training session. They compile the main facts, definitions and questions relevant to the session's theme. They map existing services for children



with special needs at the national and/or local/ regional levels of where the training takes place. They also list all relevant actors and regulations of which a guardian should be aware.

- A trainer with relevant knowledge and expertise or, alternatively, a guest lecturer can provide the thematic introduction. This work reiterates or builds on the mapping of the national and/or local referral mechanisms developed in the previous training session. Where applicable, the trainer could once more distribute [Handout 13b](#) (“service map”, [link](#)) to participants.

### Guest Lectures

#### KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

##### Introduction to Specific Procedures:

- Registration and identification
- Age assessment
- Family tracing
- Care planning
- Determination of a durable solution
- Transfer, relocation, or return of unaccompanied children
- Facts and figures, challenges, good practice examples, and solutions from the country where the training takes place

##### POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED

- **A Representative from Service Providers:** Working with migrants, asylum seekers, and refugees; Healthcare and treatment services; Social and child protection services; Outreach services; Specialised community-based organisations providing services.
- **A Representative from a Specialised UN Agency or International, National, or Local NGO**

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## Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 14:** Adequate standards of living, including appropriate housing and material assistance.
- **Handout 15:** Healthcare.
- **Handout 16:** Education and training.
- **Handout 17:** Ensuring the child’s safety.

## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and recap

- Opening of the training session and welcoming the participants.
- Recap of the previous session by a group of participants.
- Introduction of the main theme of the session.

## 2. Biographical narrative exercise: Creating a personal connection with the thematic field

- The trainer asks the participants to reflect on their own life stories and to think of a time when someone asked them to recount an event.
- This could have been an informal situation, when they were asked to describe, for instance to a family member, a friend, a community member, a teacher, a colleague or employer, or a doctor, something that has happened to them. Alternatively, it could have been in a more formal situation when, for example, a police officer, a lawyer, or a judge asked them to make a statement.
- The trainer asks the participants if they felt heard and understood and if they made a conscious decision to share certain facts and to withhold others.
- The trainer reminds the participants that they are not expected to share all details with the group and asks them to identify a key word related to this experience. The trainer asks if some participants would like to share why they chose the key word and how it describes their experience.

## 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

The trainer introduces the main themes and questions that the training session will address. The session will address the actions, assessments and decision-making processes that an unaccompanied child typically experiences after arriving in the country. It will also address the guardian's role in ensuring that these actions and decisions identify and respond to the child's special needs.

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## 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

### *First Step: Identifying Different Measures That Unaccompanied Children Go Through in the Country of Arrival*

- The trainer invites the participants to brainstorm the different actions that the child's reception involves, from the child's arrival up to when the child turns 18. While participants list actions, the trainer takes notes on the flipchart, putting the actions in chronological order.
- When the discussion ends, the trainer puts up the Guardianship Wheel. The trainer highlights the area of the wheel that indicates actions that might happen from the child arriving in the country until a durable solution is implemented. The trainer and participants compare the actions and phases indicated on the wheel with those the group compiled. The trainer highlights the key terms indicated on the wheel that the participants have not yet identified.
- The trainer integrates these terms into the overview of key actions on the flipchart. In doing so, the trainer explains – or asks participants to explain – how these actions relate to each other and why they are important for the child or the authorities in the receiving state.

### *Second Step: Organising Different Measures According to Phases*

- The trainer aims to make participants aware that some actions could take place one after the other, as actions and phases build on each other. The trainer engages the participants in a discussion of how these actions could be grouped in phases and steers the discussion to identify the following four phases.
  1. **First Contact and Identification:** The child's arrival and first contact with state authorities triggers several measures aimed at identifying and registering the child. There follows an initial referral to services that respond to the immediate needs of the child.

2. **Case Assessment and Care Planning:** After this initial phase, a process of more in-depth assessments and care planning gets under way. The goal is to better understand the child's situation, including the child's specific needs and any risks, and to respond to them in an appropriate way. Ref. *Journey of life tool*.
3. **Identification of a Durable Solution (define) in the Best Interests of the Child (define):** A process to understand the child's perspectives for the future and determine a durable solution for the child must then be initiated. This is done through a best interests' determination procedure. It must be decided if applying for international protection or another residence permit is in the child's best interests. Alternatively, the child can be transferred or relocated to another EU Member State or returned to their home country. / **Guest speaker Nilde Robotti (European Union Agency for Asylum – EUAA).**
4. **Implementation of a Durable Solution in the Best Interests of the Child:** After deciding the durable solution for the child, a new phase, the implementation phase, starts. This child could remain in the country of arrival with a new status as a recognised refugee or a person with international protection on humanitarian grounds. Alternatively, it may have been decided that the child has to return to the country of origin. In some countries, the child may be granted a residence status that lasts until their 18th birthday. However, this is not a durable solution unless a best interests' determination procedure establishes this is in the child's best interests. The authorities may decide that it is in the best interests of the child that they are relocated or transferred to another EU Member State. This may be the case, for instance, if the child's parent(s) or family members have been granted refugee or residence status there. Irrespective of the authorities' decision, the child is entitled to receive appropriate and effective support for the implementation of the durable solution. Consequently, new assessments and decisions must be made to ensure support for the child's integration in the country of arrival, relocation, return and reintegration in the country of return, and to monitor the child's safety and well-being in follow-up of these actions.

### **Third Step: Measures Concerning Child Victims of Violence or Exploitation**

- The trainer invites the participants to reflect on whether or not the actions and phases they identified would change if the child was a victim of violence or exploitation. The trainer makes additional notes on the flipchart, reflecting the comments shared by the participants. The trainer steers the discussion towards identifying actions and measures that are particularly important in the case of child victims of violence and exploitation, including in the context of trafficking or sale of children.
- The trainer notes the participants' comments, which may identify, for instance:
  - Victim counselling and assistance services for protection, recovery and rehabilitation;
  - Special protection measures during the child's participation in criminal investigations and proceedings as a victim and witness;
  - Gathering of evidence from the child in a child-sensitive way (see **Module 5**).
  - Risk assessment and individual needs assessment to prevent secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation or retaliation in criminal investigations and proceedings, and thereafter.
    - **If you do a Journey of life exercise this means the child doesn't have to repeat themselves and the guardian can do it for them if necessary (e.g. transcribing drawing, discussions into text).**

- The trainer stresses that some of the specific actions relating to child victims of violence and exploitation depend on what the child disclosed and whether or not the competent authorities are aware of what happened.
- Many unaccompanied children experience violence or exploitation in their country of origin, during the journey or after arrival in the host country. This can take the form not only of physical violence, but also of sexual violence or exploitation, being subjected to harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation or child marriage or exploitation by armed groups or being forced to work or participate in begging or illegal activities. To identify if the child has experienced acts of violence or exploitation, it is essential to hear the child's story.

#### **Fourth Step: The Guardian's Role in Supporting Child Victims of Violence or Exploitation**

- The guardian is responsible for ensuring that competent authorities identify and respond to the special needs of child victims of violence or exploitation. Child victims of violence or exploitation may have special legal, social, medical and healthcare, psychological, material and educational needs. In many countries, only children who are officially recognised as victims of crime are granted access to specialised victim support services.
- Nonetheless, the general child protection and social welfare services should be able to respond to the needs of the child, irrespective of the child's status or official recognition of the child as a victim of crime.
- The trainer reminds the participants of the exercise they undertook in Session 2.3, mapping the key actors who provide services to children in their city and/or region.
- The trainer stresses that, throughout the child's reception, the child's needs must be assessed and responded to in line with their rights and best interests. The trainer reminds participants of the four dimensions of the UNCRC introduced in Session 1.1 – primary needs, development, participation and protection (see Annex 1, Methodology Note 1, Figure 3). Guardians can use this model as a guide when assessing the needs of the child in a range of areas, such as accommodation, healthcare, safety, education, work, leisure time, social contacts and contacts with the child's family. **Again, this is typical journey of life material that can be gathered.**

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#### **Fifth Step: Group Work on Support Services for Children with Special Needs**

- The trainer divides the participants into four groups and assigns each group one of the following themes:
  - Adequate standard of living, including appropriate housing and material assistance
  - Healthcare
  - Education and training
  - Ensuring the safety and protection of the child.
- The trainer asks each group to imagine that they are a guardian in the country where the training takes place for a child who is a victim of violence or exploitation. Each group is asked to identify responses to the following question:
  - As a guardian, what do you need to know, do and be when assisting the child in their experience of violence or exploitation?

- The participants use one or more sheets of flipchart paper to take notes of their discussion and conclusions. The group work is scheduled for 40 minutes. The groups then report back to the plenary and present their notes and conclusions. The trainer facilitates the discussion, engaging all participants.
- When the exercise has finished, the trainer distributes [Handouts 14–17](#) to the participants and explains that the handouts, which are based on FRA's work, provide guidance and checklists for guardians on each of the themes they discussed.
- More guidance is available in FRA and European Commission (2015), *Guardianship for children deprived of parental care: A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking*. Further information is also available in the European Union Agency for Asylum's practical guide series. These and other resources can be accessed through FRA's e-learning platform and the associated Guardianship Wheel Systemic Resource Centre.

## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

### *First Step: Group Discussion on the Importance of Hearing the Child's Story*

- The trainer concludes this session with a discussion of the role and meaning of the child's story for the guardian. The group discusses the following question:
  - **How is hearing the child's story relevant to the guardian's knowledge, actions and attitudes discussed during the group work?**
- The group discussion identifies elements to strengthen the guardian's and other service providers' capacities to hear and support the child telling their story.
- As the participants share their comments and observations, the trainer takes notes on the flipchart. They steer the discussion towards identifying communication as a cross-cutting element.
- Communication is relevant and important for all the different themes discussed in the training programme thus far. For the guardian, it is essential to be able to engage in a trusted and respectful conversation with the child. It allows them to hear the child's story. Communication also ensures that the relevant state authorities and service providers who make decisions concerning the child hear the child's story and take it into account.
- Active Listening is a tool used to develop quality communication (see Module 5)

### *Second Step: The Role of the Guardian in Supporting the Child in Telling Their Story*

- The trainer notes that it is common for many state officials and service providers to ask unaccompanied children to provide information and to **recount their experiences**. For a child – as for anyone – it can be difficult and stressful to be asked again and again to tell their story, especially if that story involves unpleasant, sad or violent events. *Repeatedly recounting acts of violence and exploitation can create obstacles to the process of recovery and rehabilitation and contribute to re-traumatisation.*
- The information needs of the state agencies and service providers who hear the child often determine the questions they ask the child. The narration emerging from these interviews and hearings may be very fragmented. It may also be limited to only certain elements, not **holistically** representing the child's story and perspectives.
- ***The guardian may be one of the few people with a more complete understanding of the child's story. This is especially the case when the guardian has successfully established a relationship of trust with the child.***

It is also the case when they accompany the child to all the hearings, interviews and meetings with service providers that feed into the case assessment process.

- A guardian may speak to the child about these meetings, hearings and interviews and how the child feels about them. They can review the decisions that emerge from these processes with the child. In doing so, the guardian gains important insights into the child's views. They may be able to identify important elements of the child's story that competent state authorities or service providers have not heard.
- The guardian has a responsibility to handle the child's information sensibly, in accordance with the applicable rules on confidentiality. However, the guardian also has reporting obligations if the child is at risk or in danger. Understanding how to handle confidential and sensitive information concerning the child is a challenging task.
- The guardian could consult the child's lawyer on any sensitive issues that emerge from the guardian's conversations with the child. The lawyer is knowledgeable about the child's legal situation and the ongoing procedures while also bound by rules of professional confidentiality.
- The guardian should always be transparent with the child about how they handle information that the child shares. In particular, the guardian should inform the child about the national rules concerning confidentiality and reporting obligations. These points will be discussed in more detail in Session 4.2.

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

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The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:

- Summarise the key points that participants and the trainer will take from this session.
- Note contentious issues and unresolved questions or topics where consensus was not reached.
- Use the Guardianship Wheel to connect this session with the thematic fields of other training sessions, including both previous and upcoming sessions.
- Announce the key theme of the next training session.

### **Follow-up Activities:**

The trainer asks participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and present it at the next training session.

**In addition**, the trainer introduces the group work that participants must undertake prior to Session 3.2. The group work requires participants to access information from the interactive Guardianship Wheel Systemic Resource Centre on the FRA e-learning platform. They should study this information and prepare a summary and a short handout to present in Session 3.2. Further details are provided in the Session overview for Session 3.2. This group work could be introduced at an earlier moment to give the participants more time.

# Session 3.2: From arrival to durable solution: identifying and responding to the child's needs

*Guardianship Wheel Level 6: Promoting the rights and best interests of the child*

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## *Quotation from Children*

*“Everyone was asking me about my story and filling out paperwork, but they didn’t really seem interested in figuring out what happened.”*

*“I repeated a thousand times that I was 17 but then they sent me to the doctor because they didn’t believe me.”*

## *Quotation from Guardians*

*“If I hadn’t insisted, Amarildo would be without any chance today.”*

*“Having me by his side reassured him also because I was explaining the meaning of the questions and we had prepared ourselves beforehand.”*

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## A. Session overview

### Key Messages

- From the moment an unaccompanied child arrives in a country, many actors assess the child's situation, background and story.
- These assessments rely strongly on the information the child provides.
- To carry out these assessments, the competent authorities and service providers have to gather information from different actors. These are actors in the country of arrival, in the child's country of origin and possibly also in transit countries.
- Important decisions depend on the quality of these assessments. They decide the child's present and future.
- Formal decision-making processes have to be child sensitive and respect procedural safeguards.
- The guardian is in a good position to advocate for the rights and best interests of the child. The guardian also checks that the child is respected in assessments and decision-making processes concerning them.

## Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, the participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

### KNOW

- List and explain the different assessments that state authorities and service providers conduct to gather information about the child.
- Explain how these assessments inform the different decision-making processes.
- Explain how procedural safeguards ensure that a formal decision-making process respects the rights and best interests of the child.

### DO

- Monitor whether assessments and decisions concerning the child comply with their rights and the best interests.
- Intervene when formal decision-making processes or proceedings do not comply with procedural safeguards for children.

### BE

- Be a good and confident support person for the child in case assessment and decision-making.

## Preparation

### Thematic preparation

- The team of trainers prepare the thematic introduction to the session. They compile the main facts, definitions and questions relevant to the session's theme. In particular, they map the relevant national and/or local/regional assessments, procedures and decisions concerning unaccompanied children in the country and/or at the local/regional level that are relevant for the future guardians. They also list the relevant actors, services and regulations of which a guardian should be aware.

### Preparation of the group work

- The trainer introduces the group activity for Session 3.2, either in the previous session or earlier in the training programme. This allows the participants sufficient time to prepare this activity in small working groups.
- When announcing the activity, the trainer divides the participants into small groups of three or four. Each group is assigned one of the procedures covered by Session 3.2 and the corresponding handouts ([Handouts 18–24](#)). The trainer selects procedures based on the group's composition, the national context and the participants' interests. The session may need to be extended if the trainer decides to address all procedures covered in the handouts.
- The trainer distributes the handouts to the relevant groups of participants working on specific themes. The trainer asks the groups to read the handout they received. It provides information on the procedure that they are going to present. The trainer tells the group that they may refer to the Guardianship Wheel and FRA's e-learning platform for additional information if and as required.
- The trainer tells the groups to imagine assisting an unaccompanied child in this procedure. In their groups, the participants discuss the procedures and try to answer the following questions (**this will be a group work activity**):
  - What is the procedure about? Why is it necessary? What are the main steps of the procedure? Which actors are involved?



- What should a guardian know, do and be to promote the child’s rights and the best interests in this procedure?
- Where can a guardian turn to when looking for information, advice or help regarding this procedure?
- The trainer invites the working groups to organise their work independently prior to Session 3.2. They should prepare a joint presentation and a brief summary note to share with the other participants. Their presentations should be focused and limited to 10 minutes; the summary note should not exceed two pages. Trainers could adapt these instructions in line with the specific conditions and needs of the training setting

### Guest Lectures

#### KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION

- Specific needs of migrant, asylum-seeking, and refugee children and specific risks, for example risks related to smuggling, child trafficking, sexual exploitation of children, involvement of children in illegal activities, and gender-based violence. Others include harmful traditional practices such as child marriage and female genital mutilation, child labour, missing children, family reunification, or others.

#### POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED

- A prosecution services representative, lawyer, or representative from a legal aid organisation specialising in representing unaccompanied migrant, asylum-seeking, or refugee children
- A representative from a specialised UN agency, or international, national, or local NGO

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## Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 18:** Family-tracing procedure.
- **Handout 19:** Age assessment procedure.
- **Handout 20:** Best interests determination procedure.
- **Handout 21:** Asylum procedure.
- **Handout 22:** Transfer or relocation procedure.
- **Handout 23:** Residence permit procedure.
- **Handout 24:** Return procedure.
- **Handout 25:** Child-sensitive procedural safeguards.

## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and recap

- Opening of the training session and welcoming the participants.
- Recap of the previous session by a group of participants.
- Introduction of the main theme of the session.

## 2. Biographical narrative exercise: Creating a personal connection with the thematic field

- The trainer asks the participants to reflect on their own stories.
- The participants think of a time when another party, for instance a state authority, a service provider, a court of law, an employer, a school or university, or another institution or organisation, made a decision that concerned them.
- The decision may have been very important or less important, with more or less significance.
- The trainer asks the participants to think of a word that describes how they felt when they were waiting for or received the decision.
- Alternatively, the trainer could ask participants to think about an important decision taken in the life of someone they know.
- The trainer asks if some of the participants would like to share their thoughts with the group.
- The participants can explain why they chose the word and describe their feelings in relation to it.

## 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the main themes and questions that the training session will address.
- The training will address the formal procedures and decision-making processes that an unaccompanied child typically experiences after arriving in the country.
- It will also address the role of the guardian. The guardian's task is to promote the child's rights and best interests in these procedures.

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## 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

### *First step: group presentations and discussion*

- The trainer opens the floor for reports from the group work.
- Each group presents their main findings and conclusions on a specific procedure concerning the unaccompanied child.
- They also share the summaries they prepared and the original handouts.
- The trainer monitors the time limits.
- After each presentation, the trainer allows other participants to comment or ask questions.

### *Second step: relevance of various measures for the child and role of the guardian*

- When all groups have presented their work, the trainer brings this exercise to an end.
- Participants identified different phases of assessments, decisions and procedures during their first joint brainstorming in Session 3.1.
- They have now heard more in-depth presentations on some of them.
- The trainer explains that these phases do not necessarily follow a clear sequence or pattern in practice.

- They may happen consecutively, but they may just as easily overlap and be simultaneous.
- Some of the phases might not be relevant to the child. Some might be left out or come in at a later stage in the child's reception.
- The different assessments and decision-making processes are related and interdependent.
- For instance, children waiting for the outcome of the age assessment procedure may be unable to move from a first reception centre to accommodation in a community, to access school or to apply for asylum as a child, as they cannot present child-specific grounds for asylum.
- The authorities in the country of arrival issue identity cards confirming the child's status as a refugee.
- The child may not be able to access certain services or to seek employment while waiting for refugee status to be granted.
- Unless granted refugee status, the child may be unable to apply for family reunification. This right also typically expires when the child turns 18.
- *These assessments, decisions and procedures are relevant to the child's well-being, safety, development and future prospects.*
- *They depend on communication with the child and the information that the child provides.*
- They also depend on service providers' and state officials' readiness to listen, hear the child's story and genuinely take it into account.
- The trainer emphasises that some of the first actions during the arrival phase may take place before a guardian is appointed.
- In these cases, a provisional or temporary guardian should support the child until a guardian is appointed, but this is not always possible.
- Sometimes, a social worker, a member of reception staff or a community volunteer assists the child without the formal role and mandate of a guardian.
- It is therefore important that the guardian ascertains at their first meeting with the child if any assessments and decisions were taken prior to or in the absence of the guardian's support.
- If the guardian becomes aware of any mistakes or oversights in these assessments and decisions, they must clarify and rectify these.
- They should request that the decisions are revisited, and the child's files updated accordingly.
- Alternatively, they can initiate a complaints procedure.

## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

### *First step: monitoring decision-making processes concerning the child*

- The trainer concludes the session by recalling the different decisions at the core of the procedures discussed during this session.

- The trainer points out that many important aspects of the child's life depend on the decisions made by state agencies and service providers and the way these agencies and providers interact with and support the child.
- The trainer asks participants to explore the key elements of a good and strong decision. **(Each handout acts as a check list and frame for monitoring).**
- The aim is to understand how a guardian can monitor whether or not responsible state authorities or service providers manage formal decision-making processes well.
- They also aim to understand how they can monitor if the processes are in accordance with the child's rights and best interests.
- The trainer invites the participants to share their views. They let the discussion flow for a while. During the discussion, the trainer notes on a flipchart the key words identified by the participants. When the discussion ends, the trainer summarises and groups the participants' key words.
- They remind the participants of the concept of the best interests of the child. This was discussed in previous training sessions (Sessions 1.1, 2.2 and 2.3). According to Article 3 of the UNCRC, the child's best interests are a primary consideration in all actions concerning them.
- The child's best interests are considered a substantive right and, as a general principle, this helps interpret other rights and laws. This interpretation guidance is important, as it helps maintain focus on the rights of the child in complex situations. It also ensures that the child is at the centre of all decision-making processes.
- The best interests of the child are, however, also understood as a rule of procedure. This means that proceedings involving a child should take place in a way that ensures that the child's needs and rights are respected and upheld at all times. In legal and judicial terms, this general rule is expressed by the concept of 'procedural safeguards'.

### **Second step: child-sensitive procedural safeguards and the role of the guardian**

- Procedural safeguards have to be in place to ensure that formal decision-making processes comply with the principles of rule of law and due process. These processes include, for instance, best interests determination, asylum procedures, age assessment procedures or any court proceedings.
- If procedural safeguards are not in place, the legality of proceedings can be challenged. These safeguards derive from international human rights standards. They apply to all formal decision-making processes, including administrative and judicial proceedings.
- Procedural safeguards protect the rights of those involved in administrative or judicial proceedings. They apply whether the people involved are adults or children, and irrespective of their status. When children participate in administrative or judicial proceedings, procedural safeguards have to be sensitive to their needs and rights.
- The trainer concludes the session by presenting an overview of procedural safeguards. They distribute [Handout 25](#) to participants. *(We go over it together).*
- The trainer briefly explains the procedural safeguards on the handout. That they are sensitive to the rights and the needs of the child.

- When presenting the handout, the trainer makes connections with the key words participants raised in their reflection on what makes a good and strong decision.
- The trainer reminds participants that as guardians their role is to support the child and complement their limited legal capacity. This is itself considered a procedural safeguard for unaccompanied children involved in administrative or judicial proceedings and other formal decision-making processes.
- The role of the guardian is essential to monitor if other procedural safeguards are in place.
- The guardian also monitors if they are adapted to the needs and the rights of the child.
- The trainer reminds participants that many different actors are in contact with the child. These actors were identified during some of the previous training sessions. They include state officials, public or private service providers and professionals from different fields. They all have different areas of professional expertise and different roles in relation to the child.
- The guardian needs to have a basic understanding of the roles and mandates of these officials and professionals. The guardian is, however, not required to have in-depth knowledge or to be a substitute for these specialists. Rather, guardians monitor the roles of these different actors.
- The guardian's job is to ensure that these actors perform their tasks in accordance with the child's rights and best interests.

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:

- Summarise the key points that participants and the trainer will take from this session.
- Note contentious issues and unresolved questions or topics where consensus was not reached.
- Use the Guardianship Wheel to connect this session with the thematic fields of other training sessions, including both previous and upcoming sessions.
- Announce the key theme of the next training session.

### **Follow-up Activities:**

The trainer asks participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and present it at the next training session.

### **Additional links to resources for the sessions :**

- Case study exercises Module 3 : [link](#)
- Presentations for Module 3 (with or without notes) : [link](#)
- Self-evaluation of learning outcomes Module 3 : [link](#)

# Module 4: QUALITY STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES

## Module Overview

**Session 4.1 A support network for guardians and accountability**

**Session 4.2 Ethical standards in guardianship services**

## Objectives of Module 4

- Module 4 aims to make guardians aware of the importance of their own professional network and of the role of national guardianship authorities or other competent authorities responsible for the organisation and supervision of guardianship services.
- The training fosters an understanding of how continuous learning and development benefits guardians, irrespective of whether they act as professionals or volunteers. The training addresses the administrative tasks that guardians must undertake and ethical and professional standards for guardianship services. It also addresses questions related to accountability, ensuring that guardians comply with international, EU and national law.

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## Overall learning outcomes

- 4.1. Consolidate knowledge of the guardian's mandate and the specific entitlements and duties associated with it.
- 4.2. Understand the guardian's role and duties in relation to confidentiality, reporting and referral.
- 4.3. Become aware of applicable data protection law.
- 4.4. Become familiar with ethical standards in guardianship services.
- 4.5. Understand the guardian's tasks in relation to case documentation, administration and bureaucracy.
- 4.6. Develop knowledge of how to use and mobilise support for the guardian.

# Session 4.1: A support network for guardians and accountability

*Guardianship Wheel Level 7: Ethical standards, accountability and support network for the guardian*

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## *Quotation from Children*

*“I know that my guardian knows a lot of things that I don’t know.”*

*“It’s different when someone does things because they care about what’s going to happen to you. They probably can do them better.”*

## *Quotation from Guardians*

*““Even after several years I realise that I can never stop informing myself and understanding.”*

*“I try to do everything as carefully as possible because every action I take is not just about me but about another person.”*

*“After a while, I created a map that helps me understand who I need to relate to in order to meet Fatos’ needs. I could not do well as a guardian if I were on my own.”*

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## **A. Session overview**

### **Key Messages**

- Professionals and volunteers acting as guardians must fulfil specific requirements and qualifications. They may be subject to a vetting procedure.
- Guardians are bound by the rules that regulate their qualifications, training and reporting obligations.
- Guardians have certain obligations regarding case documentation, reporting to guardianship authorities or appointing authorities and case administration.
- Guardians must abide by relevant regulations concerning professional secrecy and confidentiality, data protection and reporting obligations, in accordance with national law.
- It is important for guardians to advance their personal and professional development through continued learning and training.
- As guardians must undertake complex and challenging tasks, they will benefit from a support network that can provide specialist professional advice, counselling, supervision, coaching and mentoring.

## Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, the participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

### **KNOW**

- Describe the required qualifications and training for guardians of unaccompanied children.
- Explain a guardian's duties in the area of case documentation, reporting, and administration.

### **DO**

- Create a support network among guardians of unaccompanied children and use it proactively.
- Seek help when needed.
- Respect and apply data protection law.

### **BE**

- Be open to continuous learning and personal and professional development.

## Preparation

### *Thematic preparation*

- The team of trainers prepare the session's thematic introduction. They compile the main facts, definitions, and questions relevant to the training session's theme. They gather information on the case administration tasks that guardians of unaccompanied children must carry out, in accordance with national or regional/local requirements. They also gather information on the support offered by the guardianship authority or other competent authority or organisation.
- The trainer identifies any existing networks for guardians of unaccompanied children in the country, region, or city/municipality where the training takes place. The trainer also identifies any other networks among guardians assisting national and resident children.

### *Guest Lectures*

#### **KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION**

- Introduction to the national guardianship system or regulatory framework, including qualifications and requirements for guardians, and regulations concerning case administration and reporting, mechanisms for supervision and accountability, sources of support for guardians, and opportunities for continued learning and professional development

#### **POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED**

- A representative from the national guardianship authority, where applicable, or from a comparable institution or organisation responsible for managing and supervising guardianship services for unaccompanied children
- An experienced guardian or a representative of a network or association of guardians

## Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 26:** Case file administration.



## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and recap

- Opening of the training session and welcoming the participants.
- Recap of the previous session by a group of participants.
- Introduction of the main theme of the session.

### 2. Biographical narrative exercise: Creating a personal connection with the thematic field

- The trainer asks participants to reflect on their own life stories and to think of a time when they had to interact with a state official or a professional service provider and were impressed with the professionalism or behavior of this person. The trainer asks the participants to identify a key word that describes how they felt about this interaction.
- Alternatively, the trainer could ask the participants to think about a professional or official they heard or read about in their personal or professional networks or saw in a movie.
- The trainer asks if some of the participants would like to share their thoughts with the group. Those who do should explain why they chose the key word and describe how they felt about the experience.

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### 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the main themes and questions that the training session will address, and tells participants that by carrying out the activities, and through joint reflection, **they will explore the guardian's administrative tasks**. In addition, they will explore how unaccompanied children's guardians report to the guardianship authority or another competent national authority and discuss the possibility of guardians creating a support network for their activities.

### 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

#### *First step: getting to know the administrative tasks of the guardian*

- The trainer asks the following question and facilitates the group discussion in response to it:
  - What type of information, data, and facts should a guardian record in the case file of the unaccompanied child?
- The trainer notes key words representing the participants' comments and contributions on the flipchart.
- When the discussion comes to an end, the trainer distributes [Handout 26](#) to participants and reviews the document with them. The trainer can add any additional points from the handout to the flipchart and note any tasks that participants identify but which are not included on the handout.
- The trainer reminds participants that they have to inform the child of the administrative tasks of the guardian. The guardian should also tell the child what type of information they record and how this information is shared with the guardianship authority or other competent authority.

- The guardian should tell the child that they have the right to access and view the case files that different state officials and service providers keep on them. If the child wishes to access and view their files, the guardian is available to support the child in requesting access. They can also assist the child in asking for information to clarify any questions regarding the child's case files.

### Second step: group work on sources of support for guardians

- The trainer asks the participants to form **four** (or more or less) **groups** and to **discuss** the following questions:
  - In which specific areas would you like to receive support when assisting an unaccompanied child?
  - What initiative can you take as guardians to obtain this support? Whom can you turn to?
- In some countries, regions, or cities, the participants may be highly satisfied with the support and guidance the guardianship authority offers. In this case, the trainer may invite participants to reflect on additional sources of support from other sources. They could consider in particular multiprofessional and interdisciplinary support or community-based sources of support or informal support networks.
- In other places, the guardians' expectations of the guardianship authority or other competent authorities may not be met. In this case, the trainer should ask participants to draw on the flipchart an alternative network of support people, agencies, and services. **N.B.** *in the GUIDE project the support will be structured through a peer-to-peer network coordinated and organised by the project partners (first phase) and then gradually handed over to in-country, local, means of coordination and organisation.*
- The trainer asks each group to briefly brainstorm additional sources of support that could offer them advice as a guardian, how to mobilise this support, and how they and other guardians can offer each other mutual support.
- The (four) groups address one of the following thematic areas each:
  1. Support with case file documentation and administrative tasks, including managing finance and budgetary issues.
  2. Support regarding accessing continued learning and training to promote their personal and professional development.
  3. Support in accessing advice from specialists, such as a lawyer, a child psychiatrist, a social worker, or a cultural mediator. Access to such resources allows the guardian to better support the unaccompanied child on specific issues, such as special needs or risks, reporting obligations, referral, and data protection.
  4. Supervision, coaching, and mentoring in difficult, sensitive, or particularly demanding cases.
- The group work is scheduled to last 20 minutes. Participants then report back to the plenary. The trainer moderates their discussion and invites the other groups to share their views and comments on each theme. The trainer notes the key words on the flipchart.
- The trainer steers the discussion to identify, as a minimum, the following areas and sources of support, as identified by FRA and European Commission (2015), Guardianship for children deprived of

parental care: A handbook to reinforce guardianship systems to cater for the specific needs of child victims of trafficking:

- Guardianship authorities should directly provide or facilitate guardians’ access to support services. As good practice, guardians should have access to a multidisciplinary team of professionals. This helps them to seek expertise, advice, and assistance when performing their guardianship duties.
- Guardians should have access to legal advice and counselling from specialised lawyers and/or other qualified legal professionals, for instance, specialised civil society organisations providing legal advice to migrants and asylum-seeking children and their guardians. This ensures that they are adequately informed of legal issues related to administrative and criminal procedures in which the child might be involved. These could include, for example, applications for international protection or temporary residence permits, criminal proceedings, and compensation claims.
- Where necessary, professional interpreters and/or cultural mediators should be provided. This facilitates regular communication between the child and the guardian.
- Guardians should receive systematic professional supervision and psycho-social support. This prevents burnout and assures the quality of their work. Supervision helps guardians to gain knowledge. It also helps to build and develop the skills needed to conduct their work more effectively and efficiently.
- Guardians can function only within the limits of the child protection systems and the normative framework within which they operate. Guardians should be aware of the limits of their competence, including from an emotional perspective.
- The working conditions of professionals, state officials, and volunteers, including remuneration or reimbursement of costs and, in the case of guardians, the number of cases, should be such as to maximise motivation, job satisfaction, and continuity. Good working conditions and a manageable caseload maximise guardians’ disposition to fulfil their roles in the most appropriate and effective manner.
- Guardians benefit from engaging with colleagues, and exchanging experiences and supporting each other through networks. This will be the case in our project.

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## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

- In the concluding discussion, the trainer steers discussion towards the ways in which the participants will be in contact through the establishment of networks with other guardians from their region and or countrywide and or at EU levels.
- The trainer reminds participants of the importance of peer support and of mobilising and using personal and professional networks and other relevant resources to build a community of practice offering diverse expertise, specialisation, and experience. This community of practice, whether formal or informal, can offer essential, hands-on, and fast support for guardians and help them greatly in exercising their challenging role.

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:

- Summarise the key points that participants and the trainer will take from this session.
- Note contentious issues and unresolved questions or topics where consensus was not reached.
- Use the Guardianship Wheel to connect this session with the thematic fields of other training sessions, including both previous and upcoming sessions.
- Announce the key theme of the next training session.

### **Follow-up Activities:**

The trainer asks participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and present it at the next training session.

## Session 4.2: Ethical standards in guardianship services

*Guardianship Wheel Level 7: Ethical standards, accountability and support network for the guardian*

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### *Quotation from Children*

*“We talked a lot to decide how to approach the problem. I saw that my guardian didn’t really know what to do. Then we worked it out together.”*

*“There are things I need to work out on my own although knowing that it is possible to call Beth reassures me.”*

### *Quotation from Guardians*

*“Supervision is a very important moment to understand the direction.”*

*“I had to be brave and challenge myself to talk to the judge and tell him that his decisions were not in Jon’s best interest.”*

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## A. Session overview

### Key Messages

- Guardians might find themselves in highly sensitive situations in which they have to make difficult decisions.
- Guardians are accountable for their actions and inactions.
- Ethical standards provide orientation for the performance of the guardian, including in difficult and sensitive situations.
- The performance of guardians is monitored.
- If guardians do not comply with ethics and quality standards, the child, other guardians, state agencies, and service providers have a right and an obligation to report them for misconduct.
- Guardians may observe state officials, service providers, or other guardians not complying with legal, ethical, and quality standards. They must speak out and try to redress the misconduct, including by reporting it, in accordance with national law and regulations.

### Expected learning outcomes

On successful completion of this training session, the participants should have achieved the following outcomes:

**KNOW**

- Explain ethical standards for guardians of unaccompanied children.
- Consolidate knowledge of operating as part of the referral mechanism for children whose needs are unmet or whose rights are disrespected or infringed.

**DO**

- Handle sensitive and risky situations correctly and ethically.
- Monitor other service providers' observance of ethical standards.

**BE**

- Be self-critical in trying to do the right thing.
- Be a role model for other guardians by observing ethical standards

## Preparation

### Materials

- The group exercise requires a ball of wool. This is used to provide feedback on the training course at the end of the session.

### Thematic preparation

- The team of trainers prepares the thematic introduction to the session. They compile the main facts, definitions, and questions relevant to the training session's theme. In particular, they gather information on ethical standards or codes of conduct for guardians of unaccompanied children, covering those at national and/or local/regional levels where the training takes place.
- If these standards or codes are not available, the trainers may resort to those of other professional groups, such as social workers or healthcare professionals. In some countries, a national ethics committee or comparable body may develop the professional ethics guidelines.
- If the standards or codes are available, the trainers prepare a handout in the national language. This should present an overview of the ethical standards for guardians (see [Handout 27](#)).

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### Guest Lectures

**KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION**

- Introduction to ethics: How to make ethical decisions in complex situations and relevant support available to guardians.

**POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED**

- A representative of the national, regional, or local authority responsible for guardianship services and/or an experienced guardian.
- A member of the local child protection referral mechanism who is competent to explain national reporting obligations and rules of confidentiality concerning guardians of unaccompanied children.
- A professor or lecturer from a university ethics faculty or related faculty teaching ethics, such as philosophy or medical science.
- A high school ethics teacher.

## Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 27:** Case studies for Session 4.2.

The team of trainers review the case studies proposed for the group work in this session. They develop a solid reasoning and approach to respond to these cases. There is no single response to the cases. The approach and possible responses differ between countries and depending on the specific context and interpretations of the case.

The trainers prepare to take a position on different approaches and possible solutions in each of the presented cases, in accordance with relevant national laws and regulations, ethical standards, and European and international standards.

## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening Session: Welcome and recap

- Opening of the training session and welcoming the participants.
- Recap of the previous session by a group of participants.
- Introduction of the main theme of the session.

### 2. Biographical narrative exercise: Creating a personal connection with the thematic field

- The trainer asks the participants to reflect on their own life stories and to think of a time when they had to take a difficult decision. This could be a decision that they felt was important but would have had unpleasant consequences for another person or for themselves.
- The trainer asks the participants to identify a word describing the main consideration or element that helped them make their decision.
- Alternatively, the trainer could ask participants to think about a difficult decision or an ethical dilemma from politics, a book, or a movie.
- The trainer asks if some of the participants would like to share their thoughts with the group. Those who choose to do so should explain why they chose the key word and how it describes the situation.

### 3. Introduction: Setting the thematic field

- The trainer introduces the main themes and questions, and tells participants that by carrying out the activities, and through joint reflection, they will explore ethical standards for guardianship services.
- They will also explore how they can help provide orientation for guardians in difficult and sensitive situations.

## 4. Interactive Group Work: Exploring the thematic field

### *First step: group work on handling difficult situations in an ethical way*

- The trainer introduces the group work as indicated in [Handout 27](#). The group work is based on case studies. Some describe situations in which guardians are confronted with risks or reported acts of violence against an unaccompanied child. Others consider behaviours or conduct that appear to constitute an infringement of the law. Yet others describe situations that could create difficulties for the child and the guardian for other reasons.
- The trainer divides the participants into three or four groups and hands out a case study to each group. The group work is scheduled to last 45 minutes. You can and should also use case studies and situations that participants know of and would like to address and discuss.
- The trainer asks participants to read the case study and to imagine they are the guardian of the child described in the story. The group should try to answer the following questions:
  - What are the possible options for your action in this case as the guardian of the child?
  - What could be the consequences for the child and for yourself of choosing each option?
  - Whom would you approach to find out more information about this case?
  - Where can you get support for your decision?
  - What do you decide to do in this case and why?
- After the group work, the participants report to the plenary about the case they discussed. They report their responses to the questions. The trainer moderates the discussion and encourages comments and reflections from the other participants. They also note the main points the groups raise, particularly their motivations for the decisions.
- The trainer asks the other participants if they made the same decision. The trainer asks why, and how they would explain their decision. If participants come to different conclusions, the trainer facilitates the discussion to uncover arguments for each position.

### *Second step: using human rights and children's rights principles to guide the guardian's ethical action*

- The trainer points out which of the participants' reasons and lines of argumentation are rooted in the rights and best interests of the child, as afforded under the UNCRC.
- The trainer reminds participants that the UNCRC is of almost universal application and acts both as a legal framework and as a guide, providing orientation for guardians when exercising their roles, including in difficult and sensitive situations.
- The trainer notes that some professional associations have drawn up ethical standards, codes of conduct, or deontology codes. These offer rules, guidance, and principles for the conduct of professionals. Ethical standards and codes of conduct are often rooted in international human rights law. They may be part of the legal mandate of guardians; therefore, guardians are obliged to respect and comply with them.



- Ethical standards may be in place for guardians, or for other service providers such as healthcare professionals or social workers. If so, the trainer can present them to the group. They can engage the participants in a discussion comparing these standards with the main findings and conclusions that emerged from the group work.
- The trainer suggests that participants should always review the existing ethical standards, codes of conduct, or deontological codes in a critical, analytical way, to understand if and how these standards comply with the rights and best interests of the child and the principles afforded under European and international law.
- The trainer steers the discussion towards identifying human rights and children’s rights principles that inform the development of ethical standards. These include:
  - Compliance with national law, including:
    - Respect for rules of confidentiality and privacy;
    - Compliance with reporting obligations;
    - Ethical use of technology, media, and social media;
  - Upholding the human rights of the child, in particular:
    - Promoting the child’s rights to life, survival, and development;
    - Preventing discrimination and challenging it when it occurs;
    - Making the child’s best interests a primary consideration in all matters concerning the child;
    - Promoting the child’s rights to be heard and to have their views taken into account;
  - Respect for the inherent dignity of the person;
  - Respect for the diversity of people;
  - Treating the person with respect for their physical, psychological, social, and any other characteristics.
- The trainer concludes by pointing out that respect for ethical standards is rooted in European and international standards and national law and legitimises the actions and decisions of the guardian. A solid knowledge of ethical standards and how to apply them in practice in guardianship services for unaccompanied children is important. This allows guardians to exercise their role with confidence.
- Ethical standards strengthen the service, as they provide legal certainty to the actions of guardians and other service providers. Guardians who have a firm and solid understanding of ethical standards and act accordingly are likely to communicate and interact with other stakeholders with due determination when promoting the child’s rights and best interests. They will also gain respect.
- Learning to understand and respect ethical standards is a continuous development process. Guardians may find themselves in new and challenging situations even after many years of experience.
- The trainer encourages the participants to maintain contact with other guardians, experienced professionals, coaches, or mentors, and to speak to them about sensitive issues. They can use the

debate with others to develop their knowledge of, understanding of, and confidence in applying and promoting ethical standards.

## 5. Conclusions: Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

### *First step: recalling the meaning of independence and impartiality*

- The trainer concludes this session by reminding the participants of the concept of the guardian's independence and impartiality. The trainer asks them to share what they remember of their discussion in Session 2.3.
- The trainer solicits comments from the participants and steers the discussion towards an exploration of the meaning of the child's rights and best interests as a guiding framework that can help define the guardian's independence and impartiality in relation to other service providers and state authorities.
- Being independent and impartial requires the guardians to position themselves. This is particularly the case in difficult and sensitive situations.

### *Second step: identifying the main learning objectives of the course*

- The trainer asks the participants to identify the main learning points from the programme. The trainer reminds them that, as guardians, they will probably find themselves in complex situations and will have to mobilise and draw on several or all these learning elements, such as:
  - Knowledge of national, EU and international standards on the rights of the child; laws protecting children from violence; asylum and immigration law; reporting obligations; confidentiality rules; professional secrecy and data protection; and referral mechanisms for children;
  - Skills and techniques for interacting with the child, such as communication skills, communicating in a child-sensitive way and empathetically, and active listening;
  - Analytical skills for assessing the child's situation and needs in relation to the four UNCRC dimensions (see Figure 3), taking into account the child's story;
  - Skills for monitoring actions and decisions of state officials and service providers concerning the child;
  - Confidence in knowing and exercising their mandate and being accountable for their actions;
  - Active networking skills, thus knowing who to contact when seeking and mobilising support and technical expertise for the child and themselves;
  - Courage to challenge attitudes and mindsets that might be harmful to or pose obstacles to the child and themselves as guardians.

### *Third step: conclusions on the cross-cutting importance of communication and hearing the child's story*

- The trainer concludes the session, and the training programme, by summarising the key points regarding the importance of communication, active listening and hearing the child's story. These are

the most relevant cross-cutting tasks of the guardian. Good communication is key to the guardian's role as an independent and impartial actor promoting the child's rights and best interests.

- Communication and listening skills are the basis on which the guardian creates the relationship with the child. They are also the basis for their relationships with all the relevant state actors and service providers involved.
- The guardian will always have to interact with institutions, services and agencies in the country of arrival. They may also interact with those in the child's countries of origin and transit, and with the child's family. The guardian must be open and sensitive to the different cultures, working methods and approaches, levels of knowledge, mindsets and experiences of officials and professionals. They must also be sensitive to the people involved with the child in a private capacity.
- The unaccompanied child's story and present situation are complex. This means that the child is likely to have a mixed sense of identity and belonging. The child is also likely to be perceived differently depending on the professional perspectives or personal attitudes of those they have contact with. This could make it difficult for the child to gain a sense of coherence.
- The guardian might, by the nature of their mandate, be the only person in the network of service providers who is tasked with considering all aspects of the child's story, personality and future prospects. This integrated vision is essential for promoting the child's development, well-being and social integration.
- The guardian is therefore best placed to facilitate communication and promote a connection between the child and all the state officials and professionals who play a role in the care system, whether in accommodation facilities, social welfare, education and healthcare systems or in asylum or immigration procedures.
- Previous sessions discussed the guardian's role linking the child and other actors (Sessions 2.2 and 2.3). This role also relates to mediating communication with the child, the child's carers, service providers and, potentially, their family.
- Listening to and hearing the child's story is possible and effective if the different competences of all actors involved are recognised. The guardian's competence is precisely that of knowing how to use specialist knowledge, while maintaining the overall vision of the child. They must also maintain an integrated vision of the system that favours the child's well-being, development and social integration.

## 6. Closure of the Training Session: Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

### *First step: appreciating the diversity of guardians as a resource*

- To close the training programme, the trainer asks participants to think of two key words that describe their expectations of a good guardian. The trainer lets the discussion flow and concludes by pointing out the diversity of the qualities that the participants identify. The trainer observes that diversity is an enriching resource. It is valuable for the guardianship services in the country and/or region or city/municipality where the training takes place.
- The trainer reminds participants that there is no single way of delivering guardianship services. Guardians have their own approach, background and unique qualities. They are free to appreciate their own way of being and exercising their role as guardians, just as they themselves have learned to appreciate other service providers, state officials and unaccompanied children as individuals with unique stories and resources.
- The guardian needs to create a harmonious balance of personal motivation, the expectations for guardians and professional quality standards. National law, and international and EU standards provide the common ground and framework for each guardian's actions. The guardian must respect these standards, let the standards guide their actions and promote their application. If they do so, they are free to exercise their own way of being a guardian.

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### *Second step: gathering the participants feedback on the course*

- To conclude the training programme, the trainer asks the participants to share their opinion of the course.
- The trainer throws a ball of wool to one of the participants in the circle, holding on to one end of the thread. The trainer passes the floor to the participant who catches the wool. The participant expresses their views of the course. They then hand over to another participant by throwing the ball of wool and holding on to the thread.
- In this way, the participants create a network of threads while providing their feedback. The network is a symbol of their collaboration during the course. It also represents their continued contact and collaboration, and the networks they will work with as guardians.
- In an online session, this activity can be exercised in the same way with an imaginary ball of wool. The trainer asks all participants to have their cameras and microphones on. The trainer initiates the exercise, sharing their opinion on the course. They then pass the thread to a participant, saying their name; participants repeat this exercise one by one.

### **Additional links to resources for the sessions :**

- Case study exercises Module 4 : [link](#)
- Presentations for Module 4 (with or without notes) : [link](#)
- Self-evaluation of learning outcomes Module 4 : [link](#)

# Module 5: Tools for working with Children in Guardianship

## Introductory note

The training sessions for future guardians outlined in Module 5 offer a comprehensive approach to caring for migrant children, focusing on their holistic well-being. These sessions provide both theoretical knowledge and practical tools that are useful for professionals working with vulnerable children, particularly those who have experienced migration due to conflict or disaster. **The training emphasises understanding the child's journey, creating supportive environments, and ensuring that guardians have the necessary skills to address complex psychosocial and emotional needs. Through a child-centred methodology, these sessions aim to equip participants with the ability to empower children, foster resilience, strengthen their autonomy, and effectively manage cases in a caring manner.**

## Session 5.1: Holistic Care for Migrant Children Using the Journey of Life Tool

**Session 5.1** delves into the "How" of guardianship, complementing the foundational understanding from previous modules 1-4 developed by the FRA (Fundamental Rights Agency) that focused on "What" needs to be done. This session introduces key methodologies, including the **Journey of Life (JoL) Tool**, **Active Listening**, **Assessing Children in Migration**, and **Case Management**, which are essential in providing psychosocial support to migrant children.

The **Journey of Life (JoL) Tool** serves as a core psychosocial methodology that helps children articulate their life experiences in a safe, non-threatening manner. Through activities like drawing and creating memory books, children can retrace their trajectory, identify strengths and sources of distress, build resilience, and regain control of their narratives. This tool emphasises empowerment and identity-building, both critical for children who have been uprooted from their homes.

**Active Listening** is highlighted as a foundational communication skill that helps establish trust between the guardian and the child. By focusing on verbal and non-verbal cues, and showing empathy, active listening fosters an environment where children feel heard and understood, which is especially crucial for those who have experienced trauma. Active listening ensures that the child's voice is central in the care process, reinforcing their sense of agency.

The session also focuses on **Assessing Children in Migration**, providing a holistic view of the child's environment. This includes considering family dynamics, cultural context, and the community's resources, which play critical roles in a child's recovery and adjustment. Assessment is not only about identifying risks but also about recognising the child's strengths and resilience factors that can aid in their well-being.

Finally, **Case Management** offers a structured approach to addressing the multifaceted needs of migrant children. Guardians learn how to coordinate services, manage risks, and ensure that the child's best interests are always prioritised. This framework helps guardians navigate the complexities of each child's situation by planning, monitoring, and implementing care strategies in collaboration with multiple stakeholders.

The interactive group work in Session 5.1 reinforces these concepts, allowing participants to apply the tools in real-world scenarios. The group discussions deepen understanding by engaging with diverse perspectives and experiences, ensuring that participants leave with practical insights that can be implemented in their professional settings.

## Session 5.2: Strengthening Well-Being, Resilience, and Safety of Children

The sessions in Module 5.2 will continue to build on the previous session(s), focusing on **Participation and Well-Being** and supporting migrant children with **disabilities, trauma, and addiction**. These sessions emphasise the importance of creating environments where children can actively participate in decisions that affect them, a process that significantly enhances their well-being.

In **Session 5.2.1**, the theme of **Participation** is explored as a central element of guardianship. Guardians are taught how to ensure that children's voices are heard, particularly those of migrant children who may face additional barriers due to language or trauma. This session underscores the link between meaningful participation and a child's emotional and mental well-being.

**Session 5.2.2** addresses the specific challenges faced by migrant children with **disabilities or trauma**, offering strategies for providing tailored care. Participants will explore how trauma can manifest in migrant children and how to support them holistically, integrating emotional, psychological, and physical care. This session is particularly relevant in the context of children who have experienced severe disruptions to their lives, helping guardians to better understand and respond to the unique needs of these children.

Finally, **Session 5.2.3** on **Crisis Intervention and Positive Discipline** will equip guardians with the tools to manage crises effectively while ensuring that discipline remains compassionate and constructive. Crisis intervention techniques help guardians maintain calm and provide support during moments of intense distress, while positive discipline fosters understanding and guides children towards healthier behaviours, without resorting to punitive measures.

## Conclusion

Together, these sessions offer a holistic and integrated framework for providing care to migrant children. By combining psychosocial tools like the JoL tool, communication techniques such as active listening, and practical strategies for case management and crisis intervention, future guardians are empowered to support children through some of the most challenging experiences of their lives. The comprehensive approach taught in these training modules ensures that guardians are well-equipped to address the diverse needs of migrant children, fostering resilience, safety, and well-being in the children under their care.

# Session 5.1 : Holistic Care for Migrant Children Using the Journey of Life Tool

## A. Session overview

### Key Messages:

- Holistic care involves understanding migrant children's complex psychosocial needs as expressed in Modules 1 and 2.
- The *Journey of Life (JoL) Tool* helps children map life experiences, building trust and emotional healing.
- Active listening, child-centered assessments, and case management are critical in addressing children's well-being and needs.

### Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Understand how to use the *Journey of Life Tool* to empower children and facilitate their emotional recovery.
- Develop active listening skills that foster trust and empathy.
- Learn to assess the holistic needs of migrant children, especially those displaced by conflict or disaster.
- Gain practical knowledge of case management in child protection, focusing on collaboration and prioritising the child's best interests.

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### Preparation:

- Review the *Journey of Life Tool* and be familiar with its objectives and methods. Develop your own JoL and exercise with a colleague the discussions around the JoL using active listening.
- Ensure familiarity with key concepts: active listening, assessment, and case management.
- Prepare to facilitate discussions on personal and professional challenges when working with migrant children.
- Organise materials: Post-it notes, flipcharts (for in-person sessions), or virtual whiteboard tools (for online sessions).

### Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 28** Journey of Life (JoL) Tool
- **Handout 29** Active Listening
- **Handout 30** Assessing children in migration due to conflict or disaster
- **Handout 31** Case Management

## B. Session Guide

### 1. Opening of the session (15 mins)

**Purpose:** Welcome participants, set the tone, and recap key themes.

- **Welcome and introduction:** The trainer welcomes participants, briefly outlines the session objectives, and explains the importance of understanding children's lives in the work of guardianship, and using child-centered methodologies such as the Journey of Life (JoL) tool in working with migrant children with disabilities.
- **Recap of previous session:** A group of participants presents a 5-minute summary of the previous session. They highlight the main learning points, particularly focusing on how previous discussions contribute to today's session, which focuses on psychosocial support, communication skills, assessment techniques, and case management.
- **Quotation for reflection (optional):** The trainer introduces a poignant quote from a child who has been displaced by conflict, underscoring the importance of giving children a voice in telling their own stories. This sets the emotional tone and highlights the session's focus on empowerment and active listening.
- **Introduction of the Guardianship Wheel:** The trainer explains how today's themes—*Journey of Life Tool*, *Active Listening*, *Assessing Children in Conflict*, and *Case Management*—fit into the broader framework of holistic child protection. The Guardianship Wheel helps participants visualise the interconnectedness of these themes in the role of a guardian or social worker. The main issue here is that Module 5 is the “How” we can do things whereas the FRA Modules 1-4 are mainly a focus on “What” needs to be done (the line between the two isn't clear cut though).

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### 2. Biographical narrative exercise (30 mins)

**Purpose:** Facilitate personal reflection and build connections between the participants' experiences and the session's content.

**Main activity:**

- The trainer asks participants to reflect on the following question:
  - *“Think of a time when you were responsible for supporting a vulnerable child through a difficult life experience. What tools or approaches helped you, and what did you find challenging?”*
- **In-person format:** Participants write a key word that reflects their response on a Post-it note and place it on a flipchart.
- **Online format:** Participants write their key word in the chat or use a virtual whiteboard.
- The trainer reads aloud the key words and invites each participant to briefly explain their choice. This promotes a group reflection on various approaches to working with vulnerable children.



- **Discussion:** The trainer facilitates a discussion on the emotional and professional challenges faced by participants in their work with migrant children. Participants are encouraged to think about how their experiences might relate to today's session topics. This exercise allows for deeper engagement by drawing on personal stories and professional insights.

### 3. Introduction (15 mins)

Set the thematic field, define key terms, and provide a clear roadmap for the session.

#### Overview of key topics:

The trainer introduces the four major themes of the session: *Journey of Life Tool*, *Active Listening*, *Assessing Children in Migration*, and *Case Management*. Each of these themes plays a vital role in providing comprehensive care for migrant children.

#### 1. Journey of Life (JoL) Tool:

- The JoL tool is a psychosocial methodology that helps children map their life experiences in a secure manner, promoting emotional healing and identity building. It includes activities like drawing, memory books, and life maps, which help children articulate their stories in a safe, empowering space.
- **Key objectives:** produce an understanding of the child's trajectory and current situation, building trust, empowering children, identifying strengths and vulnerabilities, and helping children project into the future.
- The trainer explains how the JoL tool is particularly useful in fostering trust between children and social workers, allowing children to regain a sense of control over their own narrative.

#### 2. Active Listening:

- Active listening is critical in creating a supportive environment where children feel heard and valued. This skill involves paying close attention to both verbal and non-verbal communication, reflecting, and showing empathy.
- **Key features:** Full attention, non-verbal cues, reflection, empathy, and feedback. Active listening is especially crucial when working with children who have experienced trauma, as it builds trust and enhances communication.

#### 3. Assessing children in migration due to conflict or disaster:

- Assessment of migrant children goes beyond traditional measures, involving a holistic view of the child's social, cultural, and psychological environment. The assessment should take into account the child's family dynamics, community resources, protection and risk factors, and the child's own knowledge and life skills.
- **Key Assessment Areas:** Capacity of families and communities, cultural dynamics, resilience factors, and resources for recovery.

#### 4. Case Management:

- Case management involves a structured, collaborative approach to ensuring that all of a child's needs are met. This process includes assessment, planning, implementation, and continuous monitoring of interventions.
- **Key Elements:** Risk analysis, multi-stakeholder involvement, and ensuring the child's best interests are prioritised. Case management is particularly important for children in vulnerable situations, such as those displaced by conflict, and helps coordinate services from multiple sectors.

**Thematic goals:** The trainer highlights that today's session will provide participants with practical tools and skills to engage with these topics, helping them better support migrant children in complex situations. They will learn how these approaches work together to form a comprehensive care framework.

#### 4. Interactive group work (60 mins)

Share the **Handouts 28-31** with the groups so they can read and make use of these in their discussions.

Encourage participants to explore the key themes through practical application and collaborative discussion.

Participants are divided into four small groups, with each group focusing on one of the main topics (*each group can do one topic only or try each -or a few- of the topics if there is time*). Each group will explore their assigned topic in detail and report back to the larger group. The trainer will rotate between groups, offering guidance and answering questions.

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##### 1. Group 1: Journey of Life Tool

- This group will discuss how the JoL tool can be adapted for use with children in different contexts (e.g., displaced by conflict, orphans, children in foster care).
- They will focus on *drawing activities, family tracing maps, and or memory books*. The group will consider the advantages of using these non-verbal communication tools, especially for children who may find it difficult to express their feelings through words.
- **Discussion points:** How can the JoL tool be used to build trust? What are the risks and challenges when using the tool with children from different cultural backgrounds?

##### 2. Group 2: Active Listening

- This group will practice active listening techniques in pairs. One participant will play the role of the child, while the other will take on the role of the social worker.
- They will focus on techniques like maintaining eye contact, using non-verbal cues, reflecting on the speaker's words, and providing empathetic responses.
- **Exercise:** After the role-play, participants will discuss what worked well, what was challenging, and how active listening can help children feel understood and supported.

##### 3. Group 3: Assessing Children in Migration

- This group will review a case study of a child displaced by conflict. They will discuss how to assess the child's psychosocial needs, considering factors like family capacity, risk and protective factors, and the child's own knowledge and skills.

- **Task:** Identify key areas that need to be addressed in the assessment, such as the child's mental health, safety, and community support. The group will also discuss how to involve the child in the assessment process and ensure that their voice is heard.

#### 4. Group 4: Case Management

- This group will work on developing a case management plan for a hypothetical child who has recently been displaced.
- They will use the **5 Ws and 1 H framework** (Who, What, When, Where, Why, and How) to break down the child's needs and devise a plan for addressing them.
- **Discussion points:** How do you balance the child's best interests with external constraints (e.g., limited resources, legal barriers)? What ethical principles should guide decision-making in case management?

**Plenary Discussion:** After 45 minutes of group work, each group will present their findings to the larger group. The trainer will facilitate a discussion, asking each group to explain how their topic fits into the broader framework of child protection.

**N.B.** The facilitator needs to emphasise that each of the topics are inter-related: a JoL is connected to quality active listening, a good understanding of what and how to assess a child's situation and the benefits of using case management methodology.

## 5. Concluding observations (25 mins)

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Summarise the session, clarify key learning points, and connect them to future training.

- **Summary of key points:** The trainer will summarise the main points from each of the four themes, linking them back to the session objectives.
  - **Journey of Life Tool:** The importance of allowing children to tell their own stories in a safe and empowering environment.
  - **Active Listening:** How this technique fosters trust and creates a supportive atmosphere.
  - **Assessment of Migrant Children:** The importance of a holistic approach that considers all aspects of a child's life and environment.
  - **Case Management:** How structured, collaborative processes help meet the complex needs of children in vulnerable situations.
- **Comparison of initial objectives and outcomes:** The trainer will compare the initial session goals with what was achieved during the discussions and group work. Were the key terms and definitions clearly understood? Did participants gain practical insights into using these tools and methodologies?
- **Link to previous and future sessions:** The trainer will locate today's session on the **Guardianship Wheel**, explaining how it connects with previous sessions (e.g., on child safeguarding) and what to expect in upcoming sessions (e.g., dealing with trauma or fostering resilience).
- **Resources and next steps:** The trainer refers participants to the **FRA e-learning platform**, where they can find additional materials, case studies, and quizzes to reinforce their learning. Participants are encouraged to continue practicing the tools and techniques discussed during the session in their professional settings.

## 6. Closure of the session (30 mins)

Prepare for the next session and reinforce participant engagement.

- **Volunteers for recap:** The trainer invites a group of volunteers to present the recap for the next session, encouraging them to highlight how today's learning has impacted their understanding of working with migrant children.
- **Summary assignment:** Participants are encouraged to submit a one-page reflection on the following:
  - What new knowledge or insights did you gain about using the JoL tool?
  - How have each of these tools impacted/affected your approach to child-centered care?
  - What challenges do you foresee in assessing and managing cases involving migrant children?

These summaries will be shared and discussed during the next session.

# Session 5.2: Strengthening wellbeing, resilience and safety of children

## A. Session overview

### Key Messages:

- Child participation is key to promoting well-being and resilience.
- Creating a safe, inclusive environment where children's voices are heard enhances their overall mental and emotional well-being.
- Migrant children, particularly those with disabilities or trauma, require tailored psychosocial support.
- Crisis intervention and positive discipline are useful tools for maintaining safety and promoting constructive behavioural change.

### Expected Learning Outcomes:

- Learn how to create environments that foster meaningful child participation and well-being.
- Gain insight into supporting migrant children who have experience of trauma, disabilities, or other vulnerabilities.
- Understand the importance of crisis intervention and how to apply positive discipline effectively.
- Develop strategies to holistically support children in crisis, focusing on long-term resilience.

### Preparation:

- Review materials on child participation, well-being, and positive discipline.
- Familiarise yourself with the challenges faced by migrant children with disabilities or trauma.
- Prepare for discussions on personal experiences with crisis intervention and discipline.
- Organise session resources such as Post-it notes or virtual whiteboards for group work and reflection exercises.

### Handouts

All handouts to this Module (the complete list) are located [here](#).

- **Handout 32** Participation and Well-being of child
- **Handout 33** Supporting the Well-Being of Migrant Children with Disabilities
- **Handout 34** Trauma
- **Handout 35** Addiction
- **Handout 36** Crisis Intervention and Psychological First Aid

- **Handout 37** Positive Discipline

## B. Session Guide

### Session 5.2.1: Participation and Well-being

- Share and use **Handout 32** Participation and Well-being of child

#### 1. Opening of the session (15 mins)

**Purpose:** Welcome and Recap

- **Trainer's introduction:**
  - Welcome participants and provide an overview of the training program and how it connects to this session.
  - Explain that today's session will cover **Participation** and **Well-being**.
  - Emphasise the importance of creating environments where children's voices are heard, and well-being is nurtured.
- **Main activity:**
  - Use the **Guardianship Wheel** to show how **Participation** is central to the interconnected themes of guardianship.
  - Recap of previous session (optional- it depends on how you organise the below three sessions): Ask volunteers to prepare and present a 5-minute summary. Distribute the summary to all participants.
  - Announce that recap summaries will be compiled into an online resource for future reference (optional) and or connect with the folders created for the sessions as well as the online access to the FRA videos on guardianship.

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#### 2. Biographical narrative exercise (30 mins)

**Purpose:** Creating a Personal Connection with the Thematic Field

- **In-Person training sessions:**
  - Pose the question: "Can you recall a moment when you felt your voice wasn't heard? How did that affect your sense of well-being?"
  - Ask each participant to write a key word that captures their response on a Post-it note.
  - Have participants place their Post-its on a flipchart and invite them to explain their word.
- **Online Training Sessions:**
  - Ask participants to share a key word in the chat function and comment on their word. Capture the responses on a virtual whiteboard and share the screenshot afterward.

**Main Activity:**

- Facilitate a discussion on how personal experiences of being heard or ignored influence well-being.
- Guide participants to reflect on how this links to their professional roles in advocating with and for children.

### 3. Introduction (15 mins)

**Purpose:** Setting the Thematic Field

- **Key Terms:**

- **Participation:** A process where children are actively involved in decision-making about issues that affect them.
- **Well-being:** A holistic state where children feel safe, supported, and able to express themselves.

- **Main themes for discussion:**

- How can we create environments where children feel safe and fully able to participate?
- How does meaningful participation impact a child's well-being?

- **Questions for the session:**

- What methods can we use to ensure all children, including those with disabilities, are able to participate?
- How does empowering children through participation improve their mental and emotional well-being?

**Break (15 mins)**

## Session 5.2.2: Supporting Migrant Children with Disabilities, Trauma, Shocks and Addiction

### Preparation:

- Share and use [Handout 33](#) Supporting the Well-Being of Migrant Children with Disabilities

### 1. Opening of the session (15 mins)

**Purpose:** Welcome and Recap

- **Trainer's Introduction:**

- Welcome participants and explain that today's session focuses on **Supporting Migrant Children with Disabilities, Trauma, and Addiction.**

- **Quotation:**
  - *"It was hard to talk about my journey, but when I finally could, it felt like a weight was lifted."* (Child reflecting on the trauma of migration)
  - *"I didn't understand what was happening to me, but someone finally explained it, and I felt less alone."* (Child with a disability describing their journey)
- **Recap:**
  - Recap of previous session by a group of participants. Volunteers present their one-page summary, which will be added to the online resource center.

## 2. Biographical narrative exercise (30 mins)

**Purpose:** Creating a Personal Connection with the Thematic Field

- **In-Person training sessions:**
  - Pose the question: "Have you ever worked with a child who has experienced trauma or deep distress? How did you respond?"
  - Ask participants to write a key word that describes their feelings or challenges when dealing with that situation on a Post-it note. Discuss key words.
- **Online training sessions:**
  - Invite participants to share their key word and comment on it. Use a virtual whiteboard to compile responses.

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## 3. Introduction (15 mins)

**Purpose:** Setting the Thematic Field

- **Key Terms:**
  - **Trauma:** A psychological reaction from deeply distressing experiences like violence or migration.
  - **Addiction:** A compulsive behaviour used as a coping mechanism for emotional pain or stress.
- **Main themes for discussion:**
  - How can trauma manifest in children, especially migrant children?
  - What are the specific needs of migrant children with disabilities?
  - How can we help children recover from trauma and addiction in a holistic way?

**Break (15 mins)**



## Session 5.2.3: Crisis Intervention and Positive Discipline

- Share and use [Handout 34](#) Trauma, [Handout 35](#) Addiction, [Handout 36](#) Crisis Intervention and Psychological First Aid, and [Handout 37](#) Positive discipline.
- N.B. Please note that although Crisis intervention and Positive Discipline are presented and used together, as they can be complementary, *they are also very different and used usually in very separate situations*. Positive Discipline is used in pedagogic situations involving the (behaviour) of the child and its environments (of which we are an important component).

### 1. Opening of the session (15 mins)

**Purpose:** Welcome and Recap

- **Trainer's Introduction:**
  - Explain the importance of **Crisis Intervention** and **Positive Discipline** in guardianship.
- **Quotation:**
  - "When I was having a panic attack, I needed someone to be calm and show me it was going to be okay." (Child reflecting on crisis intervention)
  - "I didn't need punishment; I needed someone to understand why I was acting out." (Child reflecting on positive discipline)
- **Main Activity:**
  - Recap of the previous session by volunteers.

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### 2. Biographical narrative exercise (30 mins)

**Purpose:** Creating a Personal Connection with the Thematic Field

- **In-Person Training Sessions:**
  - Pose the question: "How have you managed a crisis involving a child? What did you find most challenging?"
  - Ask participants to write a key word describing their approach or challenge on a Post-it note.
- **Online Training Sessions:**
  - Ask participants to share their key words in the chat and discuss the responses.

### 3. Introduction (15 mins)

**Purpose:** Setting the Thematic Field

- **Key Terms:**
  - **Crisis Intervention:** Immediate actions taken to support children during emotional or physical crises.
  - **Positive Discipline:** A compassionate educational approach that focuses on teaching rather than punishment.
- **Main themes for discussion:**
  - How can we respond effectively to panic attacks and other crises in children?
  - What methods can we use to ensure discipline is respectful and promotes positive behaviour change?

**Break (15 mins)**

**All group sessions 5.2.1, 5.2.2, 5.2.3.**

### 4. Interactive group work (60 mins)

**Purpose:** Exploring the Thematic Field

Participants are divided into small groups and start their group work

- **Participation and Well-being Session:** Groups discuss scenarios where child participation was either encouraged or stifled. Discuss the impact on well-being.
- **Trauma and Supporting Migrant Children:** Groups create strategies to support a hypothetical migrant child with a disability who has experienced trauma.
- **Crisis Intervention and Positive Discipline:** Each group outlines a crisis intervention plan and positive discipline strategy for a child in their care.

**Case studies :** [link](#)

You can use the case studies from our folder and or create your own. The notes in the case studies are only indicative. You can and should expand as much as possible and use to their full potential the handouts for this session and also draw on other material from the other Modules.

## 5. Concluding observations (25 mins)

**Purpose:** Summarising Key Points and Open Questions

- **Main Activity:**
  - Summarise key points, including:
    - How participation impacts well-being.
    - Methods for supporting children with trauma or disabilities.
    - Effective crisis intervention and positive discipline techniques.
  - Discuss how today's session relates to previous ones using the **Guardianship Wheel**.

## 6. Closure of the session (10 mins)

**Purpose:** Concluding Remarks, and Preparing and Announcing the Next Session

- **Main Activity:**
  - Identify volunteers for the next recap.
  - Remind participants about the online resources and FRA e-learning platform.
  - Ensure that all questions the guardians may have are answered.

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**Additional links to resources for the sessions :**

- Self-evaluation of learning outcomes Module 5 : [link](#)

# ANNEX 1: METHODOLOGY NOTES

## Methodology Note 1: Promoting the rights of the child as a framework for guardianship services and training

The manual introduces the UNCRC as a key reference for guardianship services for unaccompanied children. It is a guide for assessing and analysing the child's situation, and for making decisions in line with the child's best interests. Guardians are trained to use the UNCRC when assessing the child's needs and advocating for their rights and best interests. They also use it when safeguarding the child and liaising between the child and the state actors and service providers involved.

All EU Member States have ratified the UNCRC, as have almost all countries. It applies to all children in EU territory.

In addition, there is a common legal framework regulating service provision and the asylum procedure for unaccompanied children. The Charter and EU law regarding child protection and asylum provide this. The Charter applies to EU Member States implementing EU law (Article 51 (1)).

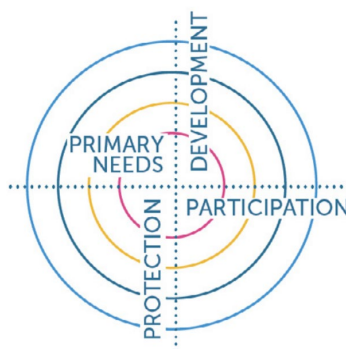
These legal standards provide a common ground for guardianship training. They apply irrespective of the diversity of guardianship services, reception conditions and training contexts for guardians in each EU Member State.

The training programme introduces the four dimensions of the UNCRC as a tool for training, analysis and action. These are covered in Session 1.1. The training refers to them throughout.

Figure 3 is a tool for training, analysis and action. It represents the four dimensions of the UNCRC, which are:

- Responding to the child's primary needs to ensure the child's survival and enable them to live a healthy life.
- Promoting the development of the child, and their resources, potential and evolving capacities to support their transition into adulthood and independent life.
- Enabling and facilitating the child's participation in all matters concerning them while safeguarding their rights to be heard and to have their views taken into account, according to their age and maturity.
- Ensuring the child's protection from all forms of neglect, violence and exploitation.

Figure 3: The four dimensions of the UNCRC



## Methodology Note 2: Promoting a trans-disciplinary approach to ensure guardianship services are rights based, child centred and sensitive to the individual child's needs

The UNCRC has a broad scope. Therefore, implementation measures for the UNCRC require different state agencies, disciplines and services providers to collaborate.

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The manual trains guardians to focus on the child's rights, needs and best interests. In doing so, the manual proposes a child-centred approach to guardianship services. The guardian's confident and skilful action is essential to mobilising support for the child from a range of actors.

The training teaches guardians that hearing the child's story and views is important when deciding which services and support the child needs. The training addresses different skills and methods that help the guardian to achieve this in practice. These include child-sensitive communication and active listening.

Guardians learn techniques for promoting the child's rights and best interests in decision-making processes. Guardians should also gain confidence in maintaining an independent role and a child-centred focus when balancing rights.

The training raises the guardians' awareness of the diversity of the children they may support. Guardians learn that it is important to adapt working methods and communication to the child's age; gender; language; family situation; and national, social and cultural background. They must also account for the child's health, evolving capacities, disabilities, and experience or risk of violence and exploitation.

## Methodology Note 3: Empowering guardians to advocate for the rights of the child

Independence and impartiality are fundamental principles of guardianship services. There is a broad consensus on the fundamental importance of these principles for guardianship services across different guidance documents issued by the Committee on the Rights of the Child, the Council of Europe and international NGOs (see 'References and Reading Lists' at <https://e-learning.fra.europa.eu/>).

Guardians must be prepared to act independently and impartially when representing the child and promoting their rights and best interests. This part of the guardian's mandate is particularly challenging

when national or local reception and guardianship systems for unaccompanied children are weak. It is also challenging when these systems do not fully conform with children's rights standards.

Guardianship services in the EU are highly diverse, FRA's research shows. There are areas where guardianship services are not yet provided in a systematic way, the research identifies. There are also gaps or weaknesses in the services that leave children unassisted and at risk.

The manual aspires to be meaningful for all contexts, irrespective of how systematic, effective or appropriate guardianship services are in a specific location. The training programme cannot be expected to redress structural or systemic weaknesses. However, it aims to enable and empower guardians to identify and analyse differences in local service provision for children and the rights of the child afforded by international standards and EU law.

The capacity to identify gaps and risks in local practice is fundamental for guardians to understand the child's situation. It helps them develop their position as an advocate for the child's rights in relation to state agencies and service providers.

## **Methodology Note 4: Encouraging guardians to seek and mobilise support**

Providing guardianship services for unaccompanied children is highly complex and sensitive. Some issues could be difficult to resolve because of the limitations the child's immigration status or experiences impose. Some experiences or aspirations of the child may remain unknown. There may be discrepancies between the child's needs and the available services.

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When supporting the child, the guardian should act independently. However, guardians cannot be expected to know and resolve all matters themselves and are neither responsible for doing so nor competent to do so.

The training programme aims to sensitise guardians to the importance of mobilising support for the child and for the guardian. The child may require support from a lawyer, healthcare services or educational support services. They may also require specialised counselling, or positive contact with a diaspora group or people in their country of origin.

The guardian may benefit from legal advice, supervision, coaching and mentoring. They may also benefit from an exchange with other guardians to share experiences and support each other. The training sensitises guardians to the help that is available. It encourages them to seek and use help for the benefit of the child and to support their guardian role

## Methodology Note 5: Promoting an interactive and explorative learning process

The trainer interacts with the participants in a combination of lectures or presentations, plenary sessions and review, and group work. The training approach balances theoretical input with practical exercises and actively engages the participants. This participatory methodology seeks to value and integrate each participant's experience and expertise.

Building on theories of adult education, the training method engages the participants in empirical analysis to relate their new knowledge and skills to the real world. People learn better if they exchange experience and engage in discussions. The learning experience therefore does not remain limited to the assimilation of existing knowledge. Rather, it engages the participants and the trainer in a learning process in which they create new knowledge together.

Following this approach, the training sessions are purposefully not organised around lectures aiming to convey information. Instead, they take an explorative approach in which the participants and the trainer explore and create the learning content together. This includes storytelling and knowledge sharing. The trainer – or, preferably, a team of trainers – who is knowledgeable and experienced, without claiming to be all knowing, facilitates this.

The learning pathway in each training session is organised according to the following main steps.

- Setting the thematic field. Introducing the main facts, definitions and questions that are relevant to the thematic field.
- Exploring the thematic field. An interactive group exercise exploring the meaning of these facts, definitions and questions and comparing them with reality. The trainer guides the participants in relating to the thematic field based on their personal and professional experiences.
- Summarising the main learning. The trainer summarises the key points that the group raised during the interactive exercise. Together they identify the main observations and learning from the session.

## Methodology Note 6: Facilitating person-centred learning through the use of biographical narration

Each training session begins with a biographical narrative exercise. This recurring opening and warm-up exercise facilitates the participants' engagement on a technical level and in their professional capacities. It also engages them in the light of their personal stories and experiences.

The biographical narrative exercise asks the participants to connect to the learning content from a certain perspective. This can be one that considers their personal life stories or an object that is precious to them. Alternatively, it can consider memories of people with whom they have been in contact professionally or privately. The participants learn to connect the learning content to periods of their childhood, adolescence or adult life.

This training approach aims to foster mutual respect, recognition and trust between the participants and the trainer, between the guardian and child, and in the guardian's interaction with state agencies and service providers.

The biographical narrative exercise poses questions about personal experiences and memories. However, it avoids being intrusive and refrains from covering sensitive issues that could upset or bother participants.

The readiness to share personal stories or memories in a professional training setting may differ between countries and cultures. It may also differ in the light of the group's composition. The exercise can be adapted therefore in light of the group dynamics. This accounts for how familiar the participants are with each other, and how comfortable they are working together and sharing personal stories.

## **Methodology Note 7: Strengthening the transcultural competence of guardians**

Considering culture and cultural diversity is essential for guardians of unaccompanied children. When assisting the child and promoting their rights and best interests, the child's cultural identity may require specific attention. Guardians should be prepared to understand how culture influences the child's needs. They must understand how culture influences the service provision adaptations that may be necessary to secure the child's well-being.

An unaccompanied child is likely to experience different cultures while moving to and within Europe, between transit and destination countries. Language, traditions, social norms and culture have a particularly important influence on the development of personal identity during childhood and adolescence. Depending on the child's migration experience, the construction of their identity may be disrupted. Causes include, for instance, lengthy and precarious migration; experiences of violence; and discrimination or exclusion based on national, religious or cultural stereotypes.

Culture influences questions of everyday life, such as food and nutrition, or hygiene. Culture influences social interaction and communication between children and adults, girls and boys, and women and men. It also influences family structure and a child's position within the family.

Guardians support the child in exercising their cultural rights. They must not only maintain the child's personal identity, but also develop and recreate it in the light of their migration experience. Guardians require transcultural competence and sensitivity to do so.

The training programme prepares guardians for this challenging task by strengthening their skills for analysis and action. Culturally sensitive communication can guide guardians in communicating and negotiating these limits in individual situations.

Pinto's three-step method, for instance, offers a reference guide for guardians communicating about cultural diversities from a rights-based perspective.

Step 1. Become aware of their norms, values and behavioural codes.

Step 2. Get to know the other person's norms, values and behaviour codes, while differentiating opinions from facts and asking clarifying questions.

Step 3. Determine how to deal with the identified differences in norms, values and behavioural codes in a specific situation. Each party should identify their limits regarding adaptation to and acceptance of the other's norms, values and behavioural codes. They should explain these limits to each other.



The guardian should help unaccompanied children work through conflicts between cultural norms in their countries of origin and residence. They can do so, for example, through the following:

- Discussing the aspects of the culture of origin and the culture where the child is now that are interesting, enriching and tolerable.
- Discussing individual behaviour or social norms that do not conform with human rights and children's rights. Here, the guardian and the child should identify individual behavioural or social norms that constitute a risk or threat to the child. These are norms such as corporal punishment or child marriage.
- Putting the child in contact with older children or adults from the same community who can guide the child in addressing cultural differences.

## **Methodology Note 8: Fostering resource-based communication and interaction**

Throughout the training programme, communication is a cross-cutting concern.

The manual pays attention to the quality of communication at different levels, such as between the guardian and the child. It looks at communication between the guardian and relevant actors in contact with the child. This includes actors such as state authorities, service providers or the child's family. It also pays attention to communication between the guardian and the guardianship authority or equivalent competent authority for guardianship services.

In addition, the manual pays attention to the quality of communication between the trainer and the participants in the training programme.

Communication and listening are the basis on which the guardian creates the relationship with the child. They are also the basis of their relationship with all the relevant actors involved with the child. To do this, the guardian must be open and sensitive to different cultures, working methods and approaches, levels of knowledge, mindsets, and experiences. These include those of the officials, professionals and private actors who are relevant to the child.

The training programme mirrors this understanding. It encourages communication, interaction and listening between the participants and trainer(s) in a collaborative and explorative learning experience. It pays attention to the personal and professional experiences, knowledge, and reflections of everyone involved.