



Guardians of
unaccompanied children

GUARDIANSHIP FOR UNACCOMPANIED CHILDREN

A MANUAL FOR TRAINERS OF GUARDIANS

E-LEARNING.FRA.EUROPA.EU

ABBREVIATIONS

EUAA	European Union Agency for Asylum
FRA	European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights
NGO	non-governmental organisation
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is designed to help institutions, organisations and individuals to train guardians of unaccompanied children or to deliver 'train-the-trainers' courses. It can be used in a range of training contexts, such as professional and academic training, on-the-job training and continuing training.

The manual is rooted in international and EU standards, such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and the Charter of Fundamental Rights of the EU (the Charter). The training programme is applicable throughout the EU, while also embracing the diversity of guardianship services and reception systems of Member States.

The manual is based on human and fundamental rights principles and ethical standards and recognises that the child and the guardian have their own personal stories, resources and capacities. It enhances guardians' confidence to promote the child's rights and best interests. It also enhances their confidence to act independently and impartially in relation to different state officials, service providers and other community members.

The manual builds on previous work of the European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA). In particular, it builds on the handbook and research on guardianship systems in EU Member States, research on relocating and returning children, and the handbooks on the rights of the child and asylum law. For more information, see the list of FRA resources in the reference and reading list at <https://e-learning.fra.europa.eu/>.

The manual guides the trainer in delivering the course, adapting it to the specific national and local contexts in which the training takes place. The parallel web-based learning platform for guardians of unaccompanied children, built on Moodle, complements the manual. It is an online resource with presentations, videos and exercises. It supports distance

learning and allows trainers and participants to access additional material through the digital platform.

To access the online learning platform, see the [FRA e-learning platform](#).

Structure of the manual

The manual consists of two parts.

Part 1: Guidance and tips for trainers

Part 1 introduces the manual's overall approach and the training methodology and offers practical guidance on how to develop and deliver a training programme.

- **Methodology notes** provide background information on the training approach and guide trainers in maintaining a consistent approach. Full details on the methodology are provided in Annex 1.
- **Organisation of the training programme** provides practical tips and hints to support trainers in organising in-person or online training sessions, or a blended programme combining both. It includes advice for adapting the training programme to national or local contexts.
- **Training session plan** is a general and flexible session plan that explains the elements of a typical training session step by step. This comes with information on the purpose, main activities and duration of each step.

Part 2: Training curriculum

Part 2 provides the curriculum for the training programme. This is structured in four chapters, comprising 10 sessions (see Box 1). The training sessions build on each other to gradually expand and deepen the participants' learning experience.

Part 2 refers to several resources that are available on the [FRA e-learning platform](#). All the handouts, a glossary, and a list of resources and further reading are available on the website.

Structure of the training programme

The training programme is composed of 10 training sessions, with an estimated duration of 25 hours.

Box 1: Structure of the training programme

CHAPTERS	SESSIONS
<p>Chapter 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</p>	<p>Session 1.1: The human rights of the child: a comprehensive guide for analysis and action</p> <p>Session 1.2: Risk and resilience of children: understanding vulnerability as a rights-based and empowering concept</p> <p>Session 1.3: Children on the move: migration experiences and life stories</p>
<p>Chapter 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</p>	<p>Session 2.1: Creating an effective relationship between guardian and child</p> <p>Session 2.2: The mandate and tasks of the guardian</p> <p>Session 2.3: Promoting the best interests of the child in relation to state authorities and service providers</p>
<p>Chapter 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 child. These include those from the moment of arrival through to the identification and implementation of a durable solution</p>	<p>Session 3.1: From arrival to durable solution: identifying and responding to the child's needs</p> <p>Session 3.2: From arrival to durable solution: promoting the best interests of the child in decisions and proceedings</p>
<p>Chapter 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</p>	<p>Session 4.1: A support network for guardians and accountability</p> <p>Session 4.2: Ethical standards in guardianship services</p>

Development of the manual

The manual was developed through the following steps.

- Literature review.** The review considered recommendations on guardianship training issued by European and international monitoring bodies such as the Committee on the Rights of the Child, Council of Europe bodies and ombuds offices.
- Training needs assessment.** The training needs assessment took place through a survey among the members of the European Guardianship Network and the European Commission Expert Group on the Protection of Children in Migration. It is based on consultations with trainers, state officials, service providers, guardians and guardianship institutions. It is also based on consultations with specialised international, EU and national institutions and organisations,
- the Council of Europe and United Nations (UN) agencies.
- Peer review of the draft manual.** FRA disseminated the draft for peer review to members of the European Guardianship Network, the European Commission and EU institutions, specialised UN agencies and the Council of Europe as well as representatives of national ministries, guardianship authorities, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academia.
- Pilot test of the manual.** The trainers' manual was tested in a pilot train-the-trainers course in November 2021 for national guardianship authorities, institutions and organisations providing training for guardians of unaccompanied children. The European Union Agency for Asylum and the International Organization for Migration participated in the pilot training.

PART 1: GUIDANCE AND TIPS FOR TRAINERS

Organisation of the training programme

Trainers

The trainer should have solid knowledge, skills and experience of training regarding the rights of the child, and children in migration and guardianship services. They should meet national requirements concerning the qualifications of trainers in this field.

The trainer is encouraged to put together a team of two or three co-trainers to collaborate in delivering the training programme. A multidisciplinary team helps to provide diverse perspectives during the training. Ideally, one team member should have experience of acting as a guardian. The training team should ideally include both men and women, and people with different backgrounds.

Participants

The training programme for guardians of unaccompanied children can be used as a guide for training future guardians. It can also be used in the on-the-job training of already-appointed guardians.

A training programme should comprise about 15 participants. This group size enables optimal engagement and interaction.

Duration of the training programme

The training programme is composed of 10 training sessions, each lasting 2.5 hours, giving an estimated total duration of 25 hours.

Trainers can extend the training by adding components. They can also dedicate more time to some of the themes, or invite guest lecturers to speak on specific topics.

Trainers will decide how to deliver the training programme based on local requirements and conditions. For example, the training could be provided in a single block lasting about four days. Alternatively, it could be delivered as a sequence of shorter sessions, for instance 2.5 hours per week for a total of 10 weeks. Other formats are possible.

It is more difficult for both trainers and participants to concentrate online for long periods. It is therefore recommended that, if the training is to be delivered online, no session should last more than 2.5 hours and that the training is not delivered in a single block.

Practical arrangements for in-person training and adaptation to online sessions

Room layout

Arrange the chairs in a circle. This stimulates the exchange of experiences among participants and enables collaboration.

IN-PERSON TRAINING

- The meeting room should be equipped with comfortable chairs arranged in a circle. Tables are not required, as they obstruct free interaction among participants

ONLINE TRAINING

- Participants should always keep their video on during the session. Encourage them to select a view that enables them to see all other participants

Equipment and tools facilitating interactive learning

Using equipment and tools – and appropriate technology – can facilitate interactive learning in in-person and online settings. A whiteboard should be

available in each session, and can be used to make notes, and to draw figures and charts. It can also be used to keep track of the participants' contributions, reflections and discussions.

IN-PERSON TRAINING	ONLINE TRAINING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The trainer works with a flipchart● The trainer removes 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The trainer uses a digital drawing application as a virtual whiteboard, such as:<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Sketchbook, a page where the trainer can write or draw▪ Jamboard, 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

Handling unresolved questions

During a training session, participants may ask questions to which the trainer does not have an immediate response. The trainer is encouraged to welcome the question and to be transparent about not having a response. This usefully sensitises participants to the fact that, as guardians, they are likely to encounter complex and sensitive issues to resolve

or questions to answer and that they will have to look for information, seek out professional expertise and consult with others.

The trainer should use the concept of a 'fridge' (or 'car park'). The group places issues or questions raised but not resolved during the session in the fridge. They are addressed later in the session, or when new knowledge or insights enable the participants – and the trainer – to resolve the issue.

IN-PERSON TRAINING	ONLINE TRAINING
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The fridge is a separate flipchart on which the trainer and participants note issues. It is displayed in the training room, and is always accessible and visible to the group	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● The fridge is a folder in a shared drive where the trainer and participants save unanswered questions and unresolved issues

Creating a repository of resources

The trainer encourages participants to share documents, materials and other resources related to the training session's content or otherwise relevant to the guardian's role. The trainer creates a repository where participants can place these resources. The repository could be hosted on flipchart paper, a virtual whiteboard or a shared drive. Its contents should remain accessible to participants after the training programme.

be stored include country information databases, tools for guardians, videos and many others.

In addition, trainers can access a glossary, and a list of references and further reading, available on the [FRA e-learning platform](#).

The repository can be used to store references to books, reports, newspaper articles or documents relating to laws or policy in the country where the training is taking place. Other resources that can usefully

Evaluating the training

To measure the effectiveness of any training, it is recommended that an evaluation exercise is carried out after the course.

A useful guide is Kirkpatrick's 'four levels of training evaluation'. This model describes a learning transfer process based on reaction, learning, behaviour and results over a period following a training inter-

vention. It therefore includes questions that elicit participants' immediate feedback on the training's relevance, usefulness and interactivity (level 1 – reaction), but also asks about participants' increase in knowledge and skills (level 2 – learning) and their ability, over time, to put into practice what they have learned to transfer their knowledge to others (level 3 – behaviour). Finally, it asks if the training allowed them to reach the target outcomes (level 4 – results).

The trainer can adapt the training to the needs of target groups in the future based on the evaluation feedback. Obviously, the specific evaluation questions depend on the training course. As a minimum, participants should receive level 1 and 2 evaluation sheets at the end of a training course. Alternatively, participants can be asked to complete an online evaluation survey.

The [FRA e-learning platform](#) provides several interactive exercises, quizzes and learning assessment tools. These facilitate the learning process and the assessment 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.

General session plan

ACTIVITY	METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	ESTIMATED TIME (MINUTES)
1. Opening session	Welcome and recap	15
2. Biographical narrative exercise	Creating a personal connection with the thematic field	15
3. Introduction	Setting the thematic field	15
Break	Before, during or after the interactive group work	10
4. Interactive group work	Exploring the thematic field	60
5. Conclusions	Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work	25
6. Closure of the training session	Summarising key points and open questions	10
TOTAL DURATION		150 (2.5 HOURS)

Session plan variation for the first training session

The group convenes for the first time in the first training session. It is a good idea to devote more time to

the biographical narrative exercise in this first session than in the following sessions so that the participants and trainers can get to know each other. This is conducive to the creation of a positive group atmosphere and collaboration throughout the training programme.

ACTIVITY	METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS	ESTIMATED TIME (MINUTES)
1. Opening session	Welcome and introduction to the course	10
2. Biographical narrative exercise – extended	Introduction of the trainer and the participants Creating a personal connection with the thematic field	40
3. Introduction	Setting the thematic field	15
Break	Before, during or after the interactive group work	10
4. Interactive group work	Exploring the thematic field	45
5. Conclusions	Reflections and analysis from the interactive group work	15
6. Closure of the training session	Summarising key points and open questions	15
TOTAL DURATION		150 (2.5 HOURS)

Step-by-step guide to the training sessions

A standardised training session is composed of the following activities.

1. OPENING OF THE SESSION	15 MINUTES
<p>Purpose: welcome and recap</p> <p>In the first training session, the trainer uses the first 15 minutes to introduce the training programme and welcome the participants.</p> <p>Subsequent sessions start with the trainer welcoming the participants. This is followed by a recap of the previous session.</p> <p>Each training session opens with quotations relevant to the session's main themes. The manual's authors gathered these quotations during the training programme's development. They are from guardians, and from unaccompanied children or young adults who had been supported by a guardian.</p> <p>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.</p> <p>Main activity</p> <p>The trainer begins by using the Guardianship Wheel to locate the training session in the interconnected themes (see Figure 1).</p> <p>From the second training session onwards, a group of participants recap 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 hand this out at the beginning of the session or send it via email prior to the session. Volunteers should present their summary in a maximum of five minutes.</p> <p>The trainer ensures that all participants volunteer to do the recap at least once during the training programme.</p> <p>The trainer compiles all the recap handouts in an online resource centre, access to which should be restricted to the participants (e.g. using Dropbox or similar services). The compiled notes become a resource that participants can refer to after the training programme when acting as guardians.</p> <p>Alternatively, the trainer can choose to lead a collective recap session, engaging all participants.</p> <p>Where appropriate, for instance in an academic or professional training context, the trainer could ask participants to prepare a presentation and brief paper on a specific theme. Each participant is free to 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.</p> <p><i>Source: FRA web page on Guardianship Wheel.</i></p>	
2. BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE EXERCISE	15 MINUTES
<p>Purpose: creating a personal connection with the thematic field</p> <p>The repetition of the opening and this warm-up exercise facilitates the engagement of the participants on a technical level and in their professional capacities. It also engages them in the light of their personal stories and experiences. It can be adapted as appropriate to the main theme of each session.</p> <p>Main activity</p> <p>The trainer poses a question that relates to the theme of the training session. They ask the participants to relate to it on the basis of their personal experiences and memories.</p> <p><i>In-person training sessions</i></p> <p>The trainer asks each participant to write a key word on a Post-it note. The participants then stick these to the flipchart. When all participants have completed this task, the trainer reads out the key words one by one. They invite the participant who wrote each key word to take the floor and explain or comment on it.</p>	

2. BIOGRAPHICAL NARRATIVE EXERCISE

15 MINUTES

Online training sessions

The trainer asks participants to write key words in the chat function of the video-conferencing platform. When 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 made available to participants through a shared drive or other space.

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

Source: See Annex 1, Methodology Note 6.

3. INTRODUCTION

15 MINUTES

Purpose: setting the thematic field

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

Main activity

The trainer shares some key terms and definitions and hints as to what the group will discuss during the session. These connect to the objectives of the training session. That is, they connect to the questions to which the session seeks to respond and to the key terms and definitions with which participants should become acquainted.

The trainer should study the session and prepare the key facts, definitions and questions required to introduce the session. This facilitates adapting the training programme to the specific training context and setting, the local needs and the participants' backgrounds. The trainer may refer to the glossary, reference list and relevant national sources to inform their preparations.

BREAK

10 MINUTES

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 MINUTES

Purpose: exploring the thematic field

The trainer leads a group discussion of 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 in which they relate to the thematic field, individually and collectively, based on their personal and professional experiences.

Source: See Annex 1, Methodology Note 5.

5. CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

25 MINUTES

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 and conclusions from the training session.

Main activity

The trainer summarises the key points and learning from the session, starting with the facts, key terms and questions presented at the beginning of the session. The trainer then compares these facts, terms and questions with the results of the group discussion, including the questions participants raise and their input based on their own experience.

The trainer presents the Guardianship Wheel (see Figure 1) and locates the training session on the wheel. The trainer engages participants in an overview of how this training session relates to previous and upcoming sessions and to other levels of the wheel. The trainer refers participants to the FRA e-learning platform and explains how participants can use this tool in their learning experience and when acting as guardians.

6. CLOSURE OF THE SESSION

10 MINUTES

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 to prepare and present the recap at the next session, as in 1. *Opening of the session* above. The volunteers are asked to meet (physically or online) before the next training session to prepare a one-page summary handout to be presented to other participants at the next session.

The summary should answer the following questions.

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

Trainers could assign additional tasks to be carried out during sessions or as homework based on the training setting and needs. Optional case study exercises, interactive exercises, quizzes and tests for self-evaluation of learning progress can be accessed from the web-based [FRA e-learning platform](#).

Session handouts

Each training session (except for Session 2.1) uses handout materials for participants. These can be found at <https://e-learning.fra.europa.eu/>.

The trainer will need to download the handouts and share these with the participants. They can be shared as printed copies or as an electronic file in PDF.

The Guardianship Wheel

The [Guardianship Wheel](#) (Figure 1) illustrates the different thematic areas addressed by the training and how they relate to each other. Each level of the wheel represents a training session, although some levels of the wheel combine two closely connected sessions.

The training programme begins with a focus on the child as a person with individual needs and a unique life story. The training then introduces the notion of the child as a rights holder. It explores the human rights the UNCRC affords children.

The different levels of the Guardianship Wheel gradually introduce the specific stories, needs and perspectives of unaccompanied children. They also introduce the guardian's role and tasks, and various procedures that unaccompanied children may undergo in the country of arrival. Finally, the training addresses questions regarding the accountability of guardians and support for their important functions. The four dimensions of the UNCRC provide the overall framework for the eight levels.

The manual encourages the trainer to display the Guardianship Wheel at the beginning and end of

Guest lectures

The training programme is stand-alone and self-sufficient. It can be enriched, however, by input from guest lecturers. The trainer could invite experienced professionals with different specialisations to present information about and their experience of themes of which guardians should be aware. In addition, local and regional guest lecturers can help participants build support networks with knowledgeable professionals, and relevant institutions and organisations.

Trainers are encouraged to invite guest lecturers from national or local organisations, universities, international organisations and service providers. They are also encouraged to invite other knowledgeable experts and experienced guardians.

Including guest lectures will increase the overall duration of the training programme. Guest lectures are scheduled for 60 minutes, following a basic format.

ACTIVITY	MAIN ACTORS	ESTIMATED TIME (MINUTES)
1. Opening session and welcome	Trainer	10
2. Guest lecture	Guest lecturer	30
3. Questions and answers Discussion	Participants and guest lecturer Trainer as moderator	15
4. Closure of the training session	Trainer	5
TOTAL DURATION		60

Some trainers have experience of engaging adolescents and young adults as co-trainers in their programmes. They may consider inviting young adults who have recently left care but who were supported by a guardian as children. As co-trainers, they offer participants an important opportunity to benefit from the personal experience, advice and recommendations of young people.

However, this is recommended only if trainers are able to ensure respect for ethical and safeguarding principles throughout the young person's participa-

tion. Children's voices could also be included in the training using videos, movies or literature.

Training approach and methodology

The methodology notes aim to guide and orient the trainers. Table 1 summarises the methodology notes prepared for the trainers. A full description of these methods is provided in Annex 1.

Table 1: Overview of methodology notes for trainers

Methodology Note 1	<p>Promoting the rights of the child as a framework for guardianship services and training</p> <p>The training approach is rooted in international and EU standards, in particular in the UNCRC and EU law. The manual proposes a children's rights-based tool. This guides guardians in analysing situations, assessing the child's needs and advocating for the child's rights and best interests</p>
Methodology Note 2	<p>Promoting a transdisciplinary approach to ensure that guardianship services are rights based, child centred and sensitive to the individual child's needs</p> <p>The training programme promotes an understanding of guardianship services that places the child at the centre of all considerations and actions. A transdisciplinary approach to guardianship training overcomes state actors' and service providers' limitations when acting within their own mandate. This approach allows guardians to advocate for the rights of the child with all state officials and service providers</p>
Methodology Note 3	<p>Empowering guardians to advocate for the rights of the child</p> <p>The training programme sensitises guardians to the strengths and weaknesses of national child protection and reception systems. It provides them with tools for assessing the impact of these limitations on the child. The programme aims to prepare guardians to assume an independent and impartial role when advocating for the rights of the child</p>

Methodology Note 4	<p>Encouraging guardians to seek and mobilise support</p> <p>The manual sensitises guardians to the importance of mobilising support – for the child and for the guardian. Support is essential, as guardians may have to handle multidimensional problems. They are not responsible for knowing of and resolving all issues by themselves</p>
Methodology Note 5	<p>Promoting an interactive and explorative learning process</p> <p>The training programme creates an interactive learning environment. This engages the participants and the trainer in developing new knowledge together</p>
Methodology Note 6	<p>Facilitating person-centred learning using biographical narration</p> <p>The training programme encourages participants to relate to the learning content based on their professional roles. It also encourages them to relate to it in the light of their personal stories and experiences. This is done through a biographical narrative exercise at the beginning of each session</p>
Methodology Note 7	<p>Strengthening the transcultural competence of guardians</p> <p>The training programme supports guardians in developing transcultural sensitivity and competence and defending the child’s rights and best interests. They are supported to do so with due consideration of the child’s cultural rights, expression and participation</p>
Methodology Note 8	<p>Fostering resource-based communication and interaction</p> <p>The training programme encourages communication between participants and trainers in a collaborative and explorative learning experience. It pays attention to the personal and professional experiences, knowledge and reflections of everyone involved. It builds on the resources of each participant</p>



PART 2: TRAINING CURRICULUM

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

Chapter overview

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

Objectives of Chapter 1

Chapter 1 introduces the UNCRC and its general principles as the main reference for guardianship services. The chapter guides the trainer and participants in using the UNCRC to map and analyse the child's needs. It also guides them in using the UNCRC to ensure that decisions and actions are rights based.

The three training sessions in this chapter 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 under-

standing in practice. Introducing children's migration stories sensitises participants to the importance of hearing the child's story.

Overall learning outcomes

- 1.1. Use the UNCRC as a comprehensive transdisciplinary guide for guardianship services.
- 1.2. Analyse how risks and resilience influence the vulnerability of the unaccompanied child.
- 1.3. Identify the specifics of the migration stories of children.
- 1.4. 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

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."

[Guardianship Wheel level](#)

■ Level 1: Children's rights principles

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe the rights of the child that the UNCRC affords • Explain the meaning and importance of a children's rights-based approach
DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Status of UNCRC implementation: achievements and challenges in the country where the training takes place ● 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A representative of a children’s rights institution, commission or organisation, for instance a national or regional ombuds office or human rights institute, university faculty, specialised UN agency, or international, national or local non-governmental organisation (NGO)

Handouts

- 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.

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. In particular, they are asked to focus on someone who was important during their childhood or adolescence.

The trainer asks participants to write a key word describing this person on a Post-it note. The participants are asked to come forward and stick their Post-it notes to the flipchart. When all participants have done this, the trainer reads out one key word at a time and asks the participant who contributed the word to comment on it, and to explain how it relates to their chosen person and why this person was important to them.

After the participants share these memories, the trainer identifies their own key word, commenting on it and, subsequently, introducing themselves. Then, each participant introduces themselves, giving their name and any other information they would like to share, for instance their profession.

For more information, see Annex 1, Methodology Note 6.

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 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). They introduce this child as any girl or boy aged between 0 and 17 years. The trainer asks the participants to engage in collective brainstorming on the needs of the child.

While the participants share their thoughts, the trainer notes key words on the flipchart.

If the discussion stops too soon, the trainer asks about specific aspects of a child’s life that participants have not 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 the participants conclude that they have compiled a more or less comprehensive list of a child’s needs. It is important to emphasise the important role that the families of unaccompanied children could play.

Second step: differences in the needs of children and adults

The trainer initiates a second group activity. They ask participants to reflect on the needs of an adult and how these differ from those of a child. As the participants share their comments, the trainer checks if the identified needs are already listed on the flipchart. They use 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.

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.
- 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.
- 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 that they created during the session. They point out that these rights are in fact afforded by the UNCRC.

The trainer adds references to specific articles of the UNCRC to match the rights in the four flipchart sections. This is in line with Handout 1. The trainer explains what the articles are about. They also give participants Handout 1 as a reference document to keep and use when acting as guardians.

The UNCRC gives children deprived of parental care the right to have a guardian appointed, which constitutes a response to a need of the child.

Children are deprived of parental care for various reasons, for instance when the parents are unable or unavailable to care for the child. A child may also be placed in alternative care because their parents are responsible for acts of violence or for exploiting the child. A child may also be separated from their parents in the context of migration.

The UNCRC addresses the common needs of all children deprived of parental care regardless of the reason. Children have the right to care and protection (Article 20 of the UNCRC). Family tracing is an important initial step in addressing this need, if it is in the child's best interests.

Four articles of the UNCRC are so fundamentally important that they are considered "general principles". These articles are relevant to the implementation of all rights under the UNCRC:

- the right to non-discrimination (Article 2)
- the best interests of the child as a primary consideration (Article 3)
- the right to life, survival and development (Article 6)
- the right of the child to be heard and to have their views taken into account (Article 12).

The best interests of the child and other general principles of the UNCRC are summarised in Handout 3.

The trainer informs the participants that the rights of the child are also strongly reflected in EU law, introducing the Charter and the relevant articles (Articles 14 (3), 24, 32 and 33) on the rights of the child (see Handout 2).

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

The trainer and participants reflect on the differences between approaches based on children's needs and children's human rights. The trainer asks the participants to share their views on the differences between these approaches. The trainer presents the evolution from a needs-based approach to a rights-based approach to conclude the brainstorming (Table 2).

The trainer emphasises that the articles of the UNCRC represent legal standards. Consequently, states must ensure that the rights of all children are respected, safeguarded and fulfilled.

In addition to being a legal document, the UNCRC can guide guardians and other service providers in their tasks. The UNCRC is multidisciplinary in scope, recognising that many children's needs and rights are inter-related and indivisible. The implementation of the UNCRC can, therefore, succeed only if all relevant state actors and service providers collaborate.

Table 2: Comparing a needs-based approach with a rights-based approach

NEEDS-BASED APPROACH	RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH
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. Duty bearers are all people or organisations with an obligation or a responsibility towards children	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. This means that 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. They are also connected to parents', guardians' and private social welfare services' obligations, as 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:

- summarise the key points that the participants and the trainer take from this session;
- note contentious issues and questions that have not been resolved conclusively or on which participants did not reach a consensus;

- use the Guardianship Wheel to draw a connection between this session and the thematic fields of upcoming sessions in the training programme;
- announce the key theme of the next training session.

Follow-up activities

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

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

Quotation from child


"There is this woman who comes to the place where I stay to talk to us children, I do not like her that much because she always tells us that we are so poor, and she is so sorry for everything we had to go through to come here.

I like better to spend time with Cristina because she does not treat me like the others, she encourages me and understands that I'm able to do things! Sometimes we try together to see who could help with a certain problem."

Quotation from guardian

"The caretaker said that Juma is a tough guy after all he has been through during his journey, he can make up with a lot and they are not worried about him, but I saw him crying."

[Guardianship Wheel level](#)

 Level 2: Risk and resilience of the child

A. Session overview

Key messages

- A person who is facing a risk is vulnerable to experiencing harm.
- Resilience helps the person to deal with risk and avoid harm. Those with strong resilience are

often better prepared to handle risks. Therefore, they are considered less vulnerable.

- Resilience depends on the person's own resources and living situation. However, it can also be strengthened by support from other people and 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the concept and the nature of vulnerability • Assess how the context influences the risk and resilience of the unaccompanied child
DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify key actors and services who can help to strengthen the child's resilience and reduce their risks • Reduce risks and strengthen the resilience of the child from a children's rights perspective
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be sensitive to their own and other actors' and services' roles in increasing or reducing the child's vulnerability

Preparation

Practical preparation

The trainer gets familiar with the graph representing the ecological and rights-based model of the unaccompanied child's vulnerability (see Figure 2). During the training session, the trainer draws the five concentric circles of the ecological model on the flipchart. The five circles are:

1. the **child** (the 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.

Guest lectures

During the training session, the trainer writes the key terms in the relevant circles. They also write key words, comments and questions that participants raise.

Thematic preparation

The trainer prepares the session's thematic introduction by compiling key facts, definitions and questions on the risks and resilience of unaccompanied children. These are in the context of the country and/or city or region where the training takes place. A trainer with relevant knowledge and expertise can provide the thematic introduction to the training session. Alternatively, a guest lecturer can provide the introduction.

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

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Risk and resilience of migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children in the country where the training is conducted: specific challenges and good practice examples • Risk and resilience of migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children along the migration route. From countries and regions of origin, to during the journey, and arrival in the EU and the country where the training takes place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A representative from service providers working with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, for instance psycho-social, healthcare and treatment, social, child protection or outreach services, or specialised community-based organisations providing services • A representative from a specialised UN agency, or international, national or local NGO

Handouts

- 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 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. The trainer asks them to think about a time in their childhood, adolescence or adulthood when they were confronted with a risk or a difficult situation. This should be a time when they benefited from another person supporting them to manage the risk or difficult situation. The trainer asks the participants to remember how they felt about the support; they express this as a key word.

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 common and specific risk factors, obstacles or barriers that unaccompanied children are confronted with in the country or city/region where the training takes place. They will also cover resilience factors, and sources of protection and support for unaccompanied children.

4. Interactive group work: exploring the thematic field

The trainer invites the participants to reflect on the risks that an unaccompanied child is likely to face and sources of resilience that will help them to deal with those risks. Participants should think of one key word describing risk factors and one describing resilience factors or sources of protection. The trainer asks the participants to write these key words on separate Post-it notes, using one colour for risk factors and another for resilience factors or sources of protection.

The trainer gives the participants a few minutes to reflect and write their key words. The trainer asks the participants to come forward as soon as they have written both key words. They place their Post-it notes on the concentric circles that the trainer drew on the flipchart when introducing the activity.

By placing their Post-it notes on specific circles on the flipchart, the participants decide what they primarily associate the specific risk or resilience factor with: the child as a person; the child's direct environment, including family, peers and friends; the community; society and broader social issues; the environment; or the state sphere, with its law and policy frameworks and ability to implement laws and policy in practice and to provide services for children and families.

The trainer picks the Post-it notes one by one and reads out the key word. They ask the participant who wrote the key word to share their thoughts with the

group. The trainer does this with all the Post-it notes on the flipchart. As the exercise proceeds, the trainer invites participants to discuss how specific risk or resilience factors in one circle relate to other circles.

The discussion aims to reflect on factors that influence the child's risks and resilience. These factors are the child's story, family and peers, the community, broader society, the work of service providers, legal regulations and state administration bureaucracy. It also aims to sensitise participants to the dynamic interactions and linkages across the circles and how the ecological model is correlated. The trainer could draw lines on the flipchart illustrating connections participants identify.

The trainer solicits additional comments from the participants, where needed. This ensures that the map of risk and resilience factors is as comprehensive as possible. The trainer encourages participants to think of risk and resilience factors that relate to hosting, experience of and contact with the home community, and the journey.

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, in particular unaccompanied children, are often considered 'vulnerable' and in need of special protection. Vulnerability tends to be understood in a disempowering sense. It is typically associated with the idea that a vulnerable person is also weak, destitute or intimidated and needs help.

This preconception might lead to the assumption that children who appear to be very strong, who are outspoken and behave in an independent and determined manner, could not have experience of violence or exploitation, and are not at risk. These stereotypes can be misleading and prevent those interacting with the child from hearing the child's 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 it can in fact be understood as an empowering concept. It recognises that everyone can defend themselves against the harmful impact that might derive from a specific risk. The capacity to mitigate a risk is called resilience.

Everyone is confronted with risks during their lifetime. Whether these risks lead to actual harm depends on the person's resources and capacities, and their access to support and remedying measures.

Where personal resources are insufficient to mitigate the risk, access to support is vital.

The trainer explains the origins of the concept of resilience. In physics, resilience is understood as an object's or a body's ability to resist external physical impact. In the case of people, the term 'resilience' describes the ability, when confronted with adversity, to:

- cope with stress and risk factors;
- cope with disruptive change;
- cope with obstacles and barriers that prevent them meeting their needs or pursuing their life project;
- maintain positive characteristics;
- maintain positive relationships;
- continue constructing and advancing their life project.

Vulnerability is, therefore, an aggregate concept: it is caused by risk and balanced by resilience. Risk and resilience interact in a dynamic way. They evolve as a child grows up 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 will aim to reduce risks. At the same time, they will strengthen the resilience of the individual child and unaccompanied children as a group.

Third step: an ecological understanding of vulnerability

Risk and resilience determine vulnerability. They are dynamic and affect the child in many ways.

This understanding is generally called an 'ecological model'. The 'ecology' of the child refers to all the social contacts and relationships of the child, and the position of the child in the family and community. It also refers to broader social, economic, legal and political issues, and their impact on the child's life and perspective.

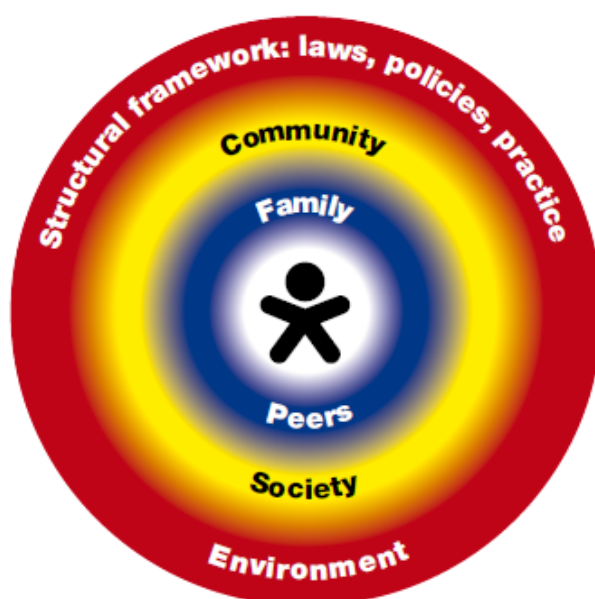
The child's personal risks and resilience may be connected to their physical, cognitive and health situation, character and life story. They are closely intertwined with risks and resilience arising from direct and indirect relationships, social contexts and the child's environment, according to the ecological model. Therefore, a person's risks and resilience interact at multiple levels and accumulate.

After this introduction to the concepts, the trainer distributes Handout 4 and Handout 5 to the participants.

The trainer 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 relations (see Figure 2).

The group may have identified risk and resilience factors that are not specifically mentioned in Handout 5. If so, the trainer can invite the participants to note these additional factors on the handout. The group's discussion may not have identified some of the factors indicated on the handout. If so, the trainer could use this occasion to make participants aware of some areas that remain unaddressed.

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



Source: FRA (2022).

Fourth step: the role of the receiving community in reducing vulnerability

Narrating their life story can help the child to process and reconcile adverse experiences. It can also help transform their experiences into perspectives for the future.

The receiving community can support this by understanding and responding to the child's needs and interacting with the child in a way that respects their rights. The receiving community's capacity to safeguard children's rights is, therefore, essential to reducing vulnerability. The receiving community must know 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. Together, these dimensions contribute to reducing risks and strengthening the resilience of the child.

The trainer concludes by pointing out 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 concerning unaccompanied children. They are seen not as disempowered individuals who need help and cannot cope with the hosting community's demands, 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 the 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. That is, they discuss how to help reduce and mitigate risks for the child and strengthen the child's resilience.

The trainer should note that the concept of vulnerability is used in EU law, including with regard to 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 Chapters 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 the participants and the trainer will take from this session;
- note contentious issues and questions that have not been resolved conclusively or on which participants did not reach a consensus;
- use the Guardianship Wheel to draw a connection between this session and the thematic fields of other training sessions, including previous and upcoming sessions;
- announce the key theme of the next training session.

Follow-up activities

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

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

Quotations from children

"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."

[Guardianship Wheel level](#)

■ Level 3: The child's migration story

A. Session overview

Key messages

- The UNCRC 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Describe risk and resilience factors that can determine the child's migration experience from home to the place of arrival • Identify individual push and pull factors of children's migration and how they relate to general push and pull factors • Recognise that the life and migration stories of children are diverse and individual
DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify challenges and opportunities related to the child's background and migration story • Ensure that officials and professionals making decisions concerning the child know the child's story and relevant information about their migration • Take action when decisions made in relation to the child are not informed by the child's story and views • Support the child in appreciating their migration experience as a resource for development and evolving capacities
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be an active and attentive listener when the child talks • Be appreciative of the child's migration experience as a resource for the child's development and capacities

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

Guest lectures

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.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Facts and figures on migration: data and statistics on migrants, asylum seekers and refugees arriving in the EU and in the country where the training takes place. This includes data on unaccompanied children● Legal framework concerning unaccompanied migrant, asylum-seeking and refugee children in the country where the training is conducted● Information about international protection or residence permit procedures in the country where the training takes place	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● A representative from service providers working with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees, for instance healthcare and treatment, social, child protection or outreach services, or specialised community-based organisations providing services● A representative from a specialised UN agency, an international, national or local NGO, a research institute or academia● An organisation representing migrant communities and diaspora groups

Handouts

- 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 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 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 three groups.

The trainer can choose to work with a single case study, or with two or three 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 clustered according to different social, economic, political and environmental terms.

The trainer may refer to Handout 6 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.

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 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. 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.

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 the participants and the trainer will take from this session;
- note contentious issues and questions that have not been resolved conclusively or on which participants did not reach a consensus;
- use the Guardianship Wheel to draw a connection between this session and the thematic fields of other training sessions, including previous and upcoming sessions;
- announce the key theme of the next training session.

Follow-up activities

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

CHAPTER 2: GUARDIANSHIP IN THE BEST INTERESTS OF THE CHILD

Chapter 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 Chapter 2

Chapter 2 builds on the theoretical and practical concepts introduced in Chapter 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 chapter 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 chapter, 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

Quotations from children

"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."

Quotations from guardians

"Before being a guardian, I thought to know what an adolescent needs. After knowing Alis 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."

[Guardianship Wheel level](#)

■ Level 4: Age and evolving capacities of the child

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 guardian in relation to an unaccompanied child
DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relate to the child ethically and humanely, while 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 the evolving capacities of the child
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be prepared to act as an adult point of reference figure for a child • Be sensitive to the child's needs in the 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.

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:

- 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	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduction to principles of child-sensitive communication, practical guidance and specific working methods for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ leading a sensitive conversation with a child, including conversations about violence, exploitation and trauma; ▪ conveying child-friendly information to migrant children, including good or bad news for the child; ▪ communicating and interacting with children affected by trauma; ▪ handling children's challenging behaviours, such as aggression • Introduction to the role of interpreters and cultural mediators, and how to work with them effectively 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A professional with a background in child development, child psychiatry or psychology • A professional with experience of 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

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. 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 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).

- 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 centre 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, neighbours 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.

In the receiving community, the child may have the same need for supportive adults as other children. They may also have other specific needs. These relate to language and culture, regularisation of status, asylum or immigration, accommodation and a range of procedures involving the child.

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.

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 the participants and the trainer will take from this session;
- note contentious issues and questions that have not been resolved conclusively or on which participants did not reach a consensus;
- use the Guardianship Wheel to draw a connection between this session and the thematic fields of other training sessions, including previous and upcoming sessions;
- announce the key theme of the next training session.

Follow-up activities

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

Session 2.2: The mandate and tasks of the guardian

Quotations from children

"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."

Quotations from guardians

"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."

Guardianship Wheel level

■ Level 5: Mandate and tasks of the guardian

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 prepare the thematic introduction to the session. They compile the main facts, definitions and questions relevant to the training session's theme.

Guest lectures

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.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

- 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 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 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.

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.

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. This aims 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. The trainer notes the participants' comments and observations on a flipchart, and prompts responses through questions, where necessary.

When the group reflection ends, the trainer invites participants to assess their strengths and possible weaknesses. These are considered in the light of their personal capacities and life stories. The trainer does not ask participants to share their thoughts, although participants who are eager to share their reflections with the group are welcome to do so.

Second step: understanding the role of the guardian

The trainer concludes this session by reminding participants that there are many ways in which guardians carry out their roles and responsibilities. It is important for the guardian to gain a sense of confidence about their role and the activities and tasks associated with it.

The rights and best interests of the child provide an overall framework. However, each guardian operates on the basis of their own resources, capacities and support networks. When acting as a guardian, it is particularly important to consider the child and the guardian as individuals. They have their own stories and individual needs, skills, capacities and competences.

Understanding their own mandate and responsibilities is important for guardians. This helps them to understand where to set the limits of their actions with and for the child. The guardian's role overlaps to some extent with the role of the parent and caregiver, but it 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, however, also part of a broader network. There are other guardians, the institutional framework in which guardians operate, 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 at home, or the diaspora community of people with a similar national or cultural origin to the child.

These groups can offer important support for the guardian. It is important for each guardian to establish a working relationship with them, as well as with the child.

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 the participants and the trainer will take from this session;
- note contentious issues and questions that have not been resolved conclusively or on which participants did not reach consensus;
- use the Guardianship Wheel to draw a connection between this session and the thematic fields of other training sessions, including previous and upcoming sessions;
- announce the key theme of the next training session.

Follow-up activities

The trainer asks the participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and to 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

Quotations from children

"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."

Quotations from guardians

"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."

[Guardianship Wheel level](#)

 Level 5: Mandate and tasks of the guardian

A. Session overview

Key messages

- Many state actors and private service providers are in contact with the unaccompanied child. This applies 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. They always focus 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. They are 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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 infringements of the child's rights or professional misconduct of state actors and services providers● Describe the decision-making processes and procedures involving an unaccompanied child
DO	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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 the best interests of the child
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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
- 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 counselling 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 13. 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, services 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.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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

- Handout 13: Case studies for Session 2.3.

The trainer prepares an additional handout, 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 in their lives when they used or received a service from a public or private service provider in their community or in another city or country. This could be a healthcare, educational, social or other service.

The trainer asks the participants to describe the service they received using a key word. Participants also identify a positive or a negative aspect of this service. The trainer asks the participants to share their key words with the group. They can comment on their key 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 public and private services available to unaccompanied children in the country, region or city where the training takes place. They will also explore the principal ways in which they interact with the child and the guardian, and how they relate.

4. Interactive group work: exploring the thematic field

First step: introduction to the group work

The trainer introduces the group work and divides the participants into four groups.

The groups receive a case study each. The group work task is to assume the role of the guardian of the child described in the case study and to 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 we think about support 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)?

The group work is scheduled for 30 minutes. Then the groups report back 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 on the flip-chart, recalling how they used this 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 to participants Handout 13, which was prepared by the trainer prior to the session. It covers the national and/or local referral mechanisms for unaccompanied children. The trainer guides the participants through the handout. The aim is to determine if all the relevant actors they 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 they identify as present or absent on the flipchart, using different colours. They allocate each actor to the dimension that the participants consider the most suitable for the actor. In this exercise, 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.

They are also attentive to broader social, economic and political questions, such as the attitudes and stereotypes concerning migrants and asylum seekers arriving in the country where the training takes place. Guardians should always be aware of media reports, of the availability of state funding for accommodation and other services for unaccompanied children, and of 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 at times that this does not seem to coincide with the information that the child shares with them, generating doubts and concerns. The guardians find it difficult to position themselves in relation to 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 in a responsible way. 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 some of the difficult situations and decisions that the participants identified in the group work. The trainer asks the group how a guardian could know what is right and wrong when supporting a child in their interactions with all the state actors, service providers and community members they encounter. Where can a guardian get their orientation from?

The trainer invites the participants to share their thoughts. The trainer steers the discussion towards identifying the UNCRC as a guide for assessing the child's case and analysing the situation. The child's story is also an important source of information.

The trainer asks the participants how this orientation could help identify responses to some of the critical questions and difficulties they identified in the group work.

Second step: understanding the independence and impartiality of the guardian

The trainer concludes the discussion by asking the participants what the impartiality and independence of the guardian could mean.

- From whom should a guardian be independent?
- Is a guardian allowed to take sides, for instance with the child's care staff or social worker, the child's teacher, the police or an immigration officer?

The trainer lets the participants engage in a discussion of these questions. The trainer steers the discussion towards understanding that the guardian should be primarily guided by the child's rights and best interests. To do this, a guardian must position themselves accordingly.

The independence and impartiality of the guardian's role depends on the capability and willingness of the guardian to take a position defending the child's interests and rights when the system does not meet the rights and the best interests of the child.

Sometimes the guardian acts in a context that creates obstacles or barriers to safeguarding the rights or meeting the needs of the child. In these cases, the guardian must take a position, acting as a link between the child and the services and state author-

ities. This act of conscious positioning is important, as the guardian acts as a human rights vector.

A lesson learned from the training programme thus far is that each guardian exercises their role in a different way. This is because each guardian's individual capacities, skills, knowledge, life story and experiences are different, as are the support network to which they have access and the child whom they support.

Guardians operate within the framework national law and regulations define. EU and international standards on the rights of the child guide them. Thereby, a national guardianship system accommodates and welcomes the individuality and diversity of guardians.

A guardian needs to feel comfortable and confident about their role. It is also important the guardian knows where to go for advice and expertise when the child's specific situation requires it. The trainer informs participants that these matters will be addressed 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 the participants and the trainer will take from this session;
- note contentious issues and questions that have not been resolved conclusively or on which participants did not reach a consensus;
- use the Guardianship Wheel to draw a connection between this session and the thematic fields of other training sessions, including previous and upcoming sessions;
- announce the key theme of the next training session.

Follow-up activities

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

CHAPTER 3: SUPPORTING THE CHILD FROM ARRIVAL TO DURABLE SOLUTION

Chapter 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 Chapter 3

Chapter 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 chapter 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 objective of the sessions in this chapter is to 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. Participants will explore how these procedures affect the child's well-being. They will also explore their meaning for the child's safety, development and perspectives for the future.

The training conveys an understanding of the guardian's role in relation to different state officials and service providers. The guardian does not require in-depth knowledge or technical professional expertise

in all matters concerning the child. However, they must be skilful and proactive in locating and mobilising professional expertise. They must also monitor the performance of officials and service providers who are in contact with the child.

A recurring theme is the importance of child-sensitive communication. Hearing the child's story is important. The child's experiences must be allowed to inform service provision and decisions concerning the child in the country of arrival. Participants will gain confidence in monitoring the quality of formal case assessments and decision-making processes.

The training sessions in this chapter aim to clarify the guardian's role in promoting the child's best interests in proceedings. The sessions also introduce the procedural safeguards that ensure the child's best interests are considered in administrative and judicial proceedings.

At this advanced stage of the training programme, the sessions engage the participants more proactively. They are tasked with forming small groups to prepare and deliver small presentations based on the handouts. The exercises aim to train the participants to gather and summarise information and develop presentation and speaking skills. These skills are useful when acting as a guardian.

Overall learning outcomes

3.1. Understand the guardian's role in different phases of the identification, reception and referral of unaccompanied children.

3.2. Get to know the procedural safeguards in administrative and judicial proceedings involving children.

3.3. Develop skills in leading sensitive conversations with children.

3.4. Gain confidence in promoting the best interests of the child in formal decision making and procedures.

3.5. Gain knowledge regarding identifying and responding to special needs of an unaccompanied child, within the mandate of the guardian.

3.6. Be prepared to mobilise specialised support for the unaccompanied child.

3.7. Gain confidence in gathering and summarising information about specific themes and presenting it to a group.

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

Quotations from children

"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."

Quotations from guardians

"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."

[Guardianship Wheel level](#)

■ Level 6: Promoting the rights and best interests of the child

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 or separation from their families. They may also be related to experiences in their home country, during the migration and after arrival.
- Support services are essential to protect the child from harm and to 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 the other actors involved.
- Adapting communication to the needs of the child is essential for identifying special needs. Due consideration must be given to 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 the competent authorities and service providers identify and respond to the child's special needs.
- Unaccompanied children may be asked to tell their stories again and again when questioned by different state authorities and service providers. Their narration may differ based on the interview setting and the interests and needs of the person who asks.

- Repeated interviewing and hearing of unaccompanied children can be stressful and re-traumatising for the child. This is especially the case 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 infor-

mation responsibly, in line with the guardian's 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Identify the range of special needs of unaccompanied children ● Explain how unmet special needs may have a negative impact on 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Hear what the child says ● Identify specific risks and needs through meaningful interaction with the child ● Refer the child to appropriate services
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 13 to participants.

Guest lectures

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to specific procedures, such as registration and identification, age assessment, family tracing, care planning, the determination of a durable solution and the transfer, relocation or return of unaccompanied children: facts and figures, challenges, good practice examples and solutions from the country where the training takes place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A representative from service providers working with migrants, asylum seekers and refugees. For instance, healthcare and treatment, social, child protection or outreach services or specialised community-based organisations providing services ● A representative from a specialised UN agency or international, national or local NGO

Handouts

- 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.

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.
3. **Identification of a durable solution in the best interests of the child.** 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.
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;
- risk assessment and individual needs assessment to prevent secondary and repeat victimisation, intimidation or retaliation in criminal investigations and proceedings, and thereafter.

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.

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 pres-

ent 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.

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

The trainer leads the participants through a concluding reflection to:

- summarise the key points that the participants and the trainer will take from this session;

- note contentious issues and questions that have not been resolved conclusively or on which participants did not reach a consensus;
- use the Guardianship Wheel to draw a connection between this session and the thematic fields of other training sessions, including previous and upcoming sessions;
- announce the key theme of the next training session.

Follow-up activities

The trainer asks the participants to identify a group of volunteers to prepare a recap of this session and to 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: promoting the best interests of the child in decisions and proceedings

Quotations 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."

Quotations 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."

[Guardianship Wheel level](#)

■ Level 6: Promoting the rights and best interests of the child

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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.

Guest lectures

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 following questions.

- 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.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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

Handouts

- 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.

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. 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. The trainer briefly explains the procedural safeguards on the handout. 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 differ-

ent 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 the participants and the trainer will take from this session;
- note contentious issues and questions that have not been resolved conclusively or on which participants did not reach a consensus;
- use the Guardianship Wheel to draw a connection between this session and the thematic fields of other training sessions, including previous and upcoming sessions;
- announce the key theme of the next training session.

Follow-up activities

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

CHAPTER 4: QUALITY STANDARDS AND ACCOUNTABILITY OF GUARDIANSHIP SERVICES

Chapter overview

Session 4.1	A support network for guardians and accountability
Session 4.2	Ethical standards in guardianship services

Objectives of Chapter 4

Chapter 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.

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

Quotations 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."

Quotations 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."

[Guardianship Wheel level](#)

■ Level 7: Ethical standards, accountability and support network for the guardian

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 confiden-

tiality, 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a support network among guardians of unaccompanied children and use it proactively • Seek help when needed • Respect and apply data protection law
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 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

- 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 behaviour 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.

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 the participants. 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 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.

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.

- Support with case file documentation and administrative tasks, including managing finance and budgetary issues.
- Support regarding accessing continued learning and training to promote their personal and professional development.
- 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.
- 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 pro-

fessionals. 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, 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 could benefit from engaging with colleagues, and exchanging experiences and supporting each other through networks.

5. Conclusions: reflections and analysis from the interactive group work

In the concluding discussion, the trainer steers discussion towards exploring the possibility of participants keeping in contact and establishing networks with other guardians from their region or country-wide. The trainer also suggests that they consider joining and expanding existing networks, where applicable.

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 the participants and the trainer will take from this session;

- note contentious issues and questions that have not been resolved conclusively or on which participants did not reach a consensus;
- use the Guardianship Wheel to draw a connection between this session and the thematic fields of other training sessions, including previous and upcoming sessions;
- announce the key theme of the next training session.

Follow-up activities

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

Session 4.2: Ethical standards in guardianship services

Quotations 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."

Quotations 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."

[Guardianship Wheel level](#)

■ Level 7: Ethical standards, accountability and support network for the guardian

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Handle sensitive and risky situations correctly and ethically • Monitor other service providers' observance of ethical standards
BE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 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 gather information on ethical standards or codes of conduct for guardians of unaccompanied children. They cover

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).

Guest lectures

KEY POINTS OF DISCUSSION	POSSIBLE INVITEES TO BE CONSIDERED
<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Introduction to ethics: how to make ethical decisions in complex situations and relevant support available to guardians	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● 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

- 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.

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 le-

gal 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 guardian 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 services 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. Each guardian has 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.

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.

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)).

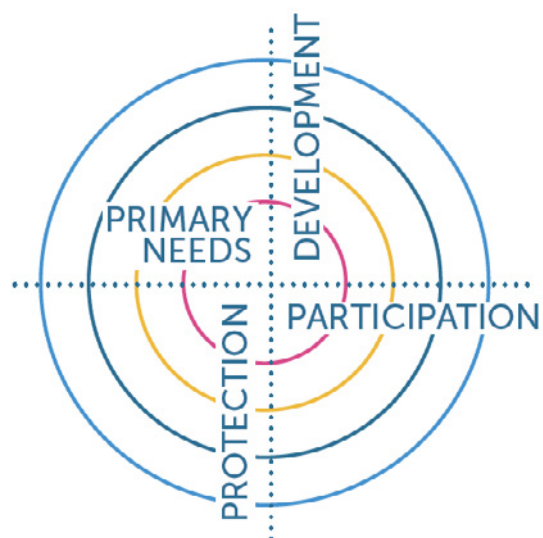
These legal standards provide a common ground for guardianship training. They apply irrespective of the diversity of guardianship services, reception conditions and training contexts for guardians in each EU Member State.

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.

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 chal-

lenging 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.

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.



PROMOTING AND PROTECTING YOUR FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS ACROSS THE EU —

This manual is designed to help institutions, organisations and individuals to train guardians of unaccompanied children or to deliver ‘train-the-trainers’ courses. It can be used in a range of training contexts, such as professional and academic training, on-the-job training and continuing training.

The manual is based on human and fundamental rights principles and ethical standards and recognises that the child and the guardian have their own personal stories, resources and capacities. It enhances guardians’ confidence to promote the child’s rights and best interests. It also enhances their confidence to act independently and impartially in relation to different state officials, service providers and other community members.

The manual guides the trainer in delivering the course, adapting it to the specific national and local contexts in which the training takes place. The parallel web-based learning platform for guardians of unaccompanied children, built on Moodle, complements the manual. It is an online resource with presentations, videos and exercises. It supports distance learning and allows trainers and participants to access additional material through the digital platform.

To access the online learning platform, see the [FRA e-learning website](#).

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