

**Child Protection Sub-Working Group**  
**16.05.2024 Minutes of Meeting**

<b>Date:</b>	<b>Thursday, 16 May 2024 at 10.00-12.00 a.m., via Webex</b>	
<b>Participants:</b>	GSVP/MMA, DG Home/EC, UNHCR CO, UNHCR Leros, METAdrasi, IRC Hellas, PRAKSIS, ICSD, NCR, The Home Project, Solidarity Now, Zeuxis, ELIL, Prolepsis Institute, HRC Athens, ELIX, Vela Greece, Intersos Hellas, Velos	
<b>Chair:</b>	<b>UNHCR: Theodora D. Tsovili (<a href="mailto:tsovili@unhcr.org">tsovili@unhcr.org</a>)</b>	
<b>Agenda</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We have the pleasure to host <b>Ms Gelly Aroni, Head of the Unit for Integration and Support of UAM</b> from the General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection who will share with us <b>developed guidance including safeguards for the access of older unaccompanied children to the labour market.</b></li> <li>• Ms Aroni will also share with us the developments regarding <b>the Helios Junior project</b> which will offer housing to former unaccompanied children and in general to young refugees.</li> <li>• <b>IRC</b> will provide an update on the project <b>“Empowerment and self-reliance opportunities to UAC reaching adulthood”</b>, which is implemented since 2023 with the support of UNHCR.</li> <li>• <b>UNHCR</b> will present its efforts to provide opportunities for the access of young refugees inc. former unaccompanied children to the labour market – <b>Solutions’ Unit</b> and <b>Child Protection Unit.</b></li> </ul>	
<b>Guidance developed by GSVP/MMA including safeguards for the access of older unaccompanied children to the labour market (General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection - GSVP)</b>	<p>The General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection/Unit for the Integration and Support for Unaccompanied Minors (GSVP) of the Ministry of Migration and Asylum (MMA) presented the legal framework and clarifications regarding the employment of unaccompanied refugee children in Greece, emphasizing recent updates aimed at preventing these children from entering the informal labour market. GSVP is currently in the process of updating the guidelines issued in May 2022 to ensure compliance with legal requirements and to underscore the role of guardians.</p> <p>GSVP focused on the substantial requirements for children aged 15 and above, outlining formal requirements and necessary documents. Reference was made to the issues related to the implementation challenges of the National Guardianship system and the required approval from the newly established <b>Guardianship Council</b>, formed via a Joint Ministerial Decision in 2024 and chaired by the General Secretary, Mr. Moskoff. The Council includes as its members the four Heads of the internal units within GSVP. According to the new legal framework, obtaining approval from the Guardianship Council in collaboration with the mandated guardianship persons is required for an unaccompanied child to access the labour market.</p> <p>Within this structure, three working groups have been established by the Guardianship Council: one addresses access to the labour market and property issues for unaccompanied children, while the others handle disputes between minors and their guardians, along with complaints against these guardians.</p>	<b>Action Points:</b>  <b>-GSVP and UNHCR will share the revised guidelines for UAC accessing the labour market with the CPsWG once they are updated</b>

	<p>GSVP highlighted <b>prohibited working conditions</b>: children under 15 years old are strictly prohibited from employment, except in artistic or commercial activities under specific conditions. Additionally, children under 18 years old are forbidden from engaging in work that could endanger their health, safety, or morality.</p> <p>The crucial role of the mandated guardianship person was emphasized, as they assist the unaccompanied children in obtaining the necessary legal documents for employment. The frameworks and guidelines issued by GSVP are designed to ensure that unaccompanied children follow legal pathways for employment, thereby preventing their exploitation in the informal labour sector (“black market”).</p>	
<p><b>Developments regarding the Helios Junior project which will offer housing to former unaccompanied children and in general to young refugees (General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection - GSVP)</b></p>	<p>The General Secretariat for Vulnerable Persons and Institutional Protection (GSVP) provided an update on the Helios Junior project, which will focus on housing, Greek language courses, and job counselling. The project will be implemented by IOM and it is expected to commence in September 2024.</p> <p>By the end of 2024, 1,000 unaccompanied children (UAC) are expected to reach adulthood. These children reaching adulthood will remain a priority for the mandated guardianship persons, ensuring their ongoing support and guidance.</p>	<p><b>Action Points:</b> n/a</p>
<p><b>Updates on the project “Empowerment and self-reliance opportunities to UAC reaching adulthood” implemented by IRC with the support of UNHCR (IRC Hellas)</b></p>	<p>IRC Hellas provided updates on the implementation of the project <b>“Empowerment and Self-Reliance Opportunities for UAC Reaching Adulthood,”</b> targeting individuals aged 18-23, in both Athens and Thessaloniki. This project, supported by UNHCR, has been implemented by IRC Hellas since 2023. It is worth noting that the project in Thessaloniki is hosted at the Migrant Integration Center of the Municipality of Thessaloniki (KEM) since August 2023, which is considered as a best practice.</p> <p>The aim of the project is to empower young refugees by helping them develop the essential skills needed for a successful transition to adulthood. This foundation promotes their social empowerment and economic self-reliance, while also preventing marginalization, exploitation, and homelessness. The project targets refugees and asylum seekers aged 18-23 who are former unaccompanied children, regardless of their gender or country of origin.</p> <p>Since the beginning of the implementation, <b>the project has provided in total support to 203 young adults</b>, the majority of whom are male (81%), with most coming from Somalia (20%) and Afghanistan (12%). Among them, 20 individuals have disabilities, and 18 were living in precarious conditions.</p>	<p><b>Action Points:</b> n/a</p>

	<p>The project operates across four main intervention axes to address various needs: 1) Psychosocial support, 2) Employability support, 3) Assistance in navigating the housing market, and 4) Greek courses and educational opportunities.</p> <p>In Athens, <b>95 individuals have enrolled in Greek language classes</b>, enhancing their ability to integrate and communicate effectively. To assist with housing, <b>45 participants have attended at least one housing information session</b>, helping them navigate the complex housing market.</p> <p>Job counselling has been a significant focus, offering one-on-one job counselling sessions, job readiness training, and job placement services. The project has also fostered networking with collaborative companies and facilitated participation in job fairs, providing remote support when necessary. Additionally, efforts have been made to raise awareness about the risks of undocumented employment and to increase access to both formal and non-formal educational opportunities.</p> <p>Indicatively, <b>169 individuals have attended at least one group or individual employability session</b>, and <b>39 people have secured formal employment</b> during or after exiting the program.</p> <p>Application for Athens, please use the following link: <a href="https://ee-eu.kobotoolbox.org/x/J4fQ0mzT">https://ee-eu.kobotoolbox.org/x/J4fQ0mzT</a></p> <p>Applications for Thessaloniki can be submitted at: <a href="https://ee-eu.kobotoolbox.org/x/UDDh2gMg">https://ee-eu.kobotoolbox.org/x/UDDh2gMg</a></p> <p>For more detailed information, please refer to the attached presentation provided by IRC Hellas available in English.</p>	
<p><b>UNHCR will present its efforts to provide opportunities for the access of young refugees inc. former unaccompanied children to the labour market (UNHCR - Solutions' Unit &amp; Child Protection Unit)</b></p>	<p>UNHCR, Solutions' Unit, presented its initiatives to support refugees, including young refugees who were formerly unaccompanied children, in their integration into the job market.</p> <p>These actions encompass preparing individuals for employment, connecting them with potential employers, and assisting with necessary documentation. Notably, UNHCR sports specific programs such as the "<i>Adama Centre</i>" through Caritas Hellas in Athens, the "<i>Blue Refugee Centre</i>" through Solidarity Now in Thessaloniki, "Stepping Stone" through METAdrasi while Intersos is present in Ioannina and Heraklion Development Agency of the Municipality of Heraklion in the islands of Crete.</p> <p>Through these partnerships, UNHCR aims to establish and expand a network of potential employers for refugees, guided by specific protocols and safety measures. All efforts led in the <b><i>Adama online job-matching platform</i></b>, which serves as a</p>	<p><b>Action Points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Extend the Adama online job-matching platform to refugee youth aged 16 years and above (UNHCR).</b></li> <li>- <b>Schedule a meeting between GSVP and UNHCR to discuss the use of UNHCR's job-matching platform (GSVP/UNHCR).</b></li> </ul>

digital meeting place connecting refugees with potential screened and approved employers and companies. In 2024, **900 refugees and asylum seekers aged 18 to 23 have registered** in the UNHCR Adama online job matching platform system.

UNHCR through its implementing partners and specific projects, provides to the refugees and asylum seekers the following upskilling and reskilling opportunities:

-“Ready4Business”: educational and training programme for refugee entrepreneurs, implemented by METAdrasi with the support of UNHCR.

-“Academic Guidance”: this program, implemented by METAdrasi with the support of UNHCR, focuses on facilitating connections with public and private secondary and tertiary education institutions, while also offering scholarships.

-“Childcare assistants”: vocational programme which educates refugees to acquire skills and competencies so that they find employment as nannies in Greece.

-“Caregivers to People with Disabilities”: refugees are trained to acquire the necessary qualifications and skills – including specialized medical terminology – to become caregivers to people with disabilities or chronic diseases.

-“Intercultural Mediators”: the program trains and certifies refugees to provide mediation services to fellow refugees and asylum-seekers, enhancing their access to essential services like accommodation, health care, and employment. Implemented in collaboration with the Ministry of Migration and Asylum. The first 38 intercultural mediators, who are in the final stage of certification, have been trained through this project.

Through all these efforts, as of March 2024, data shows that since January 2022, a total of 1460 refugees have been employed, receiving 1156 job offers.

UNHCR’s Solutions Unit also presented the "Adama online job-matching platform" to the participants of the CPSWG. Currently, the platform is used for refugees and asylum seekers above the age of 18.

UNHCR’s Child Protection Team, in collaboration with GSVP, has drafted guidelines and safeguards to ensure the safe inclusion of refugee and asylum-seeking youth aged 16 and above into the labour market, including unaccompanied children. It is to be explored the possibility of extending the use of the platform to refugee youth, in line with legal provisions for employment, and how the platform could benefit the GSVP.

For more detailed information, please refer to the attached presentation provided by UNHCR available in English.

**AOB**

The next CPsWG will take place in July. The date and time will be confirmed.

**Action Points:**

n/a