Minutes

The meeting titled **“OBSERVATORY 2”** in the framework of the European Program ERASMUS +/ΚΑ2 SCHEME Sustainable Codes and Holistic Environment for Minor migrants in Europe (2020-1-FR01-KA202-080497) was held on Tuesday 23 of November 2021 from 10:00a.m. to 13:00p.m. o’clock in the Meeting Room (3rd floor) of the Regional Directorate of Primary and Secondary Education of Thessaly, located in Dimitras 25 & Garivaldi, in Larissa, in which participated Mrs Dimitra Xesfigouli, Mrs Ioanna Chatzopoulou, Mrs Stella Kapsali (as members’ team of the program), Mrs Dimitra Makri (as Coordinator of the Refugees’ Education) and Mr Asterios Ypsilos (head of the non-formal education at the NGO KEAN). During this meeting the participants discussed the following subjects according to the agenda sent: Anthropology of migration, typology of unaccompanied minor migrants (age, sex, marital status, education)...

Initially, the participants introduced themselves emphasizing their role regarding the unaccompanied minor migrant’s reception and care. In this context, Mrs Dimitra Makri declared that she is responsible for the reception of all minor migrants (unaccompanied children or/and the ones with their families members) in all Thessaly region and their inclusion in the school and social environment as well. Mr Asterios Ypsilos described his role as manager of the non-formal education at the NGO KEAN, which receives and cares 40 unaccompanied minor migrant boys in the hostel in “Kokkina Nera” (a location near Larissa, the capital city of Thessaly region).

Afterwards, has done a brief presentation (through ppt) of Scheme project in which the partners of the project were presented, its frame was analyzed and the general aims as well as the specific objectives of the project were clarified, mainly regarding the better understanding of the unaccompanied minor migrant’s typology and their support by professionals. More specifically, it is explained that the European SCHEME Program is coordinated by the ADPEP66 Agency of France (TOULOUGES, Languedoc-Roussillon) and supported by a group of partners from Spain, France, Morocco, Senegal and Greece. Also, that its aims are about to provide professionals (teachers, psychologists, social workers, etc.) involved in the reception, care and education of unaccompanied refugee children, the appropriate methods and the necessary tools to support their school and social integration in the host country. Moreover, the discussion is focused on the creation of an interdisciplinary team of researchers and professionals related to the reception, care and education of unaccompanied minor immigrants, as it is intended to be created and operated in accordance with the IO1 of the SCHEME project. It is emphasized the need to adapt an holistic approach to the issue of unaccompanied minor refugees - at local and transnational level - so that professionals can develop the appropriate responses to meet their needs and develop their abilities, removing the "psychologicalization" (: the emphasis on trauma) and without - at the same time - minimizing the importance of this very often truly traumatic experience.

After the related explanation to the questions rose about the project, Mrs Dimitra Makri identified that the unaccompanied refugee children in the area of ​​Thessaly have been placed by the Ministry of Immigration Policy of Greece in Kokina Νera, Agria and Makrinitsa. She also stressed that the Greek state is supported by the IOM, the International Organization for Migration, and by UNHCL, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, which operate in consultation helping host governments to manage migration flows and relative crises effectively. In this line operate also the Greek Ministries of Education and Labour as well.

Mrs Dimitra Makri and Mr Ypsilos explained the extremely difficult conditions of the TRAVEL of unaccompanied refugees’ children from their countries of origin to Greece. According to their personal History recorded by the social workers of KEAN, other unaccompanied refugees’ children crossed the land border (access to Greece from Turkey via the river Evros) and others crossed the Aegean Sea by boat. Those who cross Turkey often experience miserable travel conditions as they are forced to live for months in the Turkey’s jungles and face the police who chase them and very often the sexual harassment by adults who undertake the movement of children. This temporary passage through Turkey is a traumatic experience for children both because of the harshness of the circumstances and because of the long duration of the painful experience. On the other hand, the children who cross the sea by boat experience the abandonment in the sea and the fear of drowning in the turbulent waters. When the children arrived in Greece, they are welcomed by the Reception and Identification Centers for Refugees located in Mytilene, Chios, Kos and Evros. Then, these children are seeking asylum, however they do not have the necessary documents with them.

Mr Asterios Ypsilos referred to the aforementioned unaccompanied refugees’ children’ countries of origin which are Pakistan, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, Egypt, Morocco, Palestine. Also, he is referred to the other demographic characteristic of these children (boys, 13 to 17 years old). Otherwise, as Mrs Ypsilos mentioned, the big majority of the 3.500 unaccompanied refugees’ children’ in Greece are boys of this age (only 8% approximately are girls). He also underlined the important mobility of the children, as more than 135 refugees’ children are recorded during the recent 2 years in the structure KEAN which however can host only 40 children per year.

After coming of age, these children are registered on a special platform of the Ministry of Immigration Policy which arranges them in apartments within the urban area of the city with the assistance of the ESTIA program. Also the Ministry of Labour supports their vocational rehabilitation.

Regarding the different professionals of the NGO KEAN who are in charge of the aforementioned children’ care, Mr Ypsilos referred caretakers, cleaners and cooks who manage the practical issues of refuges children but also social workers, layers, psychologists and the coordinator of the structure as well who take care of their psychology and their school, social and vocational inclusion.

According to Mr Ypsilo, the basic problem regarding the inclusion of all unaccompanied refugees’ children is the language difficulties, as some of them know some English but the big majority doesn’t know their mother tongue, due to the great poverty of their family and social environment in the country of origin.

we presented and analyzed the Robert MICHIT's -EPD method- (Steps 1 to 4) which is an innovative method that provides a holistic, objective and specialized approach to obtain the necessary information about the unaccompanied minor refugees’ needs and define a related sustainable intervention. We explained that we have to adapt the EPD method to provide trainees / experts with a tool for approaching and empowering unaccompanied minor refugees and we discussed the protocole for the transfer of the method which had been created by Robert Michit. (Duration of the IO2: 03.11.2019 - 30.06.2021). In the same line we created a list of 4 referents - 2 for each of one of the trainees (: Dimitra Xesfigooli and Ioanna Chatzopoulou) which are related to the refugee’s support process in Thessaly (Coordinators of Refugees’ Education) and teachers who work in the field of refugee’s integration.

Planning the observatories was the main topic subject of the rest of the meeting. We underlined the content, function, and objectives of the LOCAL OBSERVATORIES as well as their duration from 01.12.2020 to 31.10.2022. More specifically, we explained the basic topics of the 10 thematic meetings (5 from the University of Thessaly and 5 from Regional Directorate of Thessaly) of the local observatories, which are the anthropology of migration, its routes and causes, the description of these routes, the detection of traumas and problems, the development of networks of intervention and prevention, the identification of the related solutions and practices and the legal sustainable interventions.

Also, we identified the ypology of participants involved in the observatories so that they fit to the objectives of these observatories and we listed their name, the organization they work and their responsibilities taken regarding the basic domains of refugees’ care (housing, alimony, hospital care, education, the escort, and generally the social and legal framework for the protection and integration of unaccompanied refugee children). We decided that the 1st thematic meeting of the Regional Directorate will involve the three team members of European projects of Regional Directorate (D. Xesfigooli, I. Chatzopoulou, S. Kapsali), the Coordinator of Refugees issues in Thessaly, Mrs. Dimitra Makri, and the Responsible of the MKO KEAN, in Thessaly, Mr. Asterios Ipsilos which manages the unaccompanied minor migrants’ issues (from their arrival to their school and social inclusion).

The session ended with the relevant photographic material of the participants in the meeting.