



Personalized  
support for  
unaccompanied  
minors



## Who is considered an unaccompanied minor?

- Someone under the age of 18
- who arrived in Greece unaccompanied by an adult responsible for him/her, according to the law or to cultural customs of his/her home country and for the time that they remain without a guardian, or
- who has been left unaccompanied after having entered Greece.

## How METAdrasi supports unaccompanied minors

Unaccompanied minors are an extremely vulnerable group and face particular difficulties. METAdrasi has been supporting these vulnerable persons for the past five years, providing safe and immediate escort from detention centers and unsecure or dangerous conditions (i.e. homelessness) to accommodation centers, with teams of trained professionals, consisted of social scientists and interpreters. Until now we have carried out **over 1,100** escorting missions for the safe transfer of **more than 4,200** minors. From our experience it has been observed that if children were under the close supervision of a guardian, they would not succumb to what are often high risk choices. Without an effective Guardianship Network for Unaccompanied Minors many children would not have access to the National Protection System. For this purpose METAdrasi, for the first time in Greece, managed to design and implement a pilot project for a guardianship network, with the cooperation of the Norwegian organization Vergeforeningen Folgesvennen and with the collaboration of organizations participating in the network of "We are all Citizens", as well as other European Organizations with great experience in this field.



# METAdrasi's Guardianship Network for Unaccompanied Minors

The "Guardianship Network for Unaccompanied Minors" is an innovative and pioneering project for the Greek standards, which started on 1.11.2014.

Through a specific process of assessment and training that was designed taking into consideration good practices that are already implemented abroad, METAdrasi staffed the first structured Guardianship Network in Greece with adequately trained persons. The main purpose of that project was the effective implementation in practice of the role of guardian for the protection and exercise of the rights of children as well as the safeguarding of their basic needs. The ultimate goal of the project is to provide those children with the right to enjoy their childhood, something that will affect their whole life.

The Guardianship Network consists of 45 members who act in close cooperation with the Public Prosecutors for minors and with the First Instance Public Prosecutors in their areas of operation. The Guardianship Network acts in the following areas: Athens, Thessaloniki, Lesvos, Chios, Samos, Kos, Leros and Ioannina. It supports minors who are detained or staying in accommodation centers and open or closed camps and provides them with care specific to their needs. The members of the Network are social scientists (psychologists, lawyers, specialists in international law, sociologists, teachers, etc.) with experience in the field of protection of minors and other vulnerable groups. They are people with communicational, cooperational and organizational skills, who also possess great sensitivity, humanism and altruism.



# What do members of the Guardianship Network do?

The members of the Guardianship Network, with the written authorization of the competent Public Prosecutor for Minors or the First Instance Public Prosecutor, act for the benefit of minors on issues relating to:

- asylum procedures
- family reunification procedures
- communication with the minors' family members to determine their best interests
- healthcare
- education
- psychosocial support

## In addition to the above, the Guardianship Network members:

- develop meaningful and substantial relationships with minors
- visit museums and places for children's activities
- participate in theatrical games and cooking classes
- create strong friendships with minors-beneficiaries of the project
- take actions to develop the minors' talents
- offer the minors the opportunity to experience childhood, a luxury that they have been deprived of.

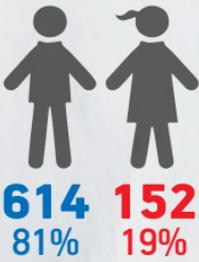


Throughout the project, the members of the Network are supported by the project team and an interdisciplinary team of skilled lawyers, psychologists and certified interpreters of METAdrasi.

What is most important is that **the minors have their own guardian** a person of reference to whom they can turn at any time and know that s/he will be always on their side.

## Statistics

Beneficiaries' gender



Beneficiaries' age



1-5 years old:	19
6-10 years old:	74
11-14 years old:	300
15-17 years old:	373



# The Guardianship Network in... steps

**1 Referral**  
of an unaccompanied minor  
from stakeholders

**2 Authorization** from  
the Public Prosecutor for Minors

**3 First meeting**  
with the minor with  
the assistance of an interpreter

**4 Best interest  
assessment** of the minor

**5 Guidance**  
during the asylum procedures

**6 Representation** of the  
minor during the asylum  
procedures

**7 Identification and Development**  
of the minor's skills

**8 Provision of support**  
to educational activities

**9 Identification**  
of creative activities  
for the minors

**10 Participation in sessions**  
with a psychologist

**11 Organization of group  
activities** for the minors

**12 Development of a  
personalised relation**  
with the minor

## When does the responsibility of the members of the Network end?

The Public Prosecutor's authorization ends when the minor:

- moves to another area
- comes of age
- reunites with his family or relatives
- absconds from the accommodation centre and its whereabouts are unknown

## Program Results

During the 18 month period of implementation, the guardianship network **took care of 766 children** and **implemented over 10.000 actions**, the majority of which included joint activities with the minors.

The members of the Network, shared their unique experiences:

«We felt like mothers whose children were going to school for the first time»

«At first the children were shy and were hesitant to get closer to us. In the classroom, they were trying to copy the text from the blackboard and trying to discover the meaning of the Greek letters and words. When it was time for a break, they stayed in their seats, until the teacher explained to them that "when we hear the bell, we are allowed to go outside to rest". It was impressive how quickly they socialized and became part of the classroom. They seemed very happy attending school.»

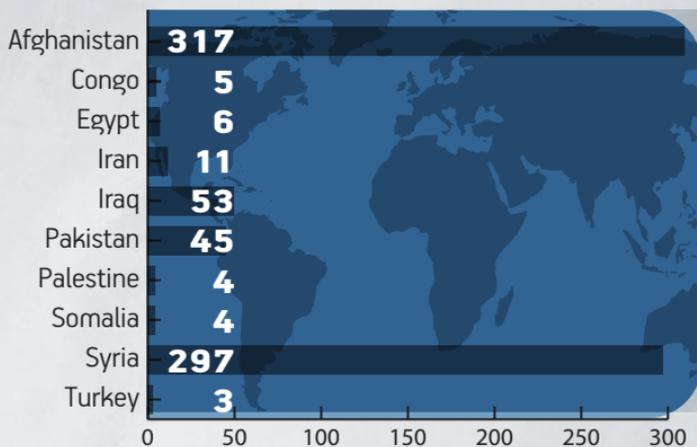
«Two brave girls, full of life, love and gratitude, fighting for their rights. We have a lot to learn from them.»

«Although the child has faced great difficulties from a very young age and has been forced to stay on his own for a long period, he remains optimistic, sociable and full of love for life and humanity.»

«I will never forget the eyes of the child - he was staring at me the entire time I was describing to him the ways in which I could help him.»

«Through my contact with the minors, I have received love and the strength to continue.»

### Beneficiaries' countries of origin



Ethiopia 1, Albania 1, Algeria 1, Georgia 1, Ghana 1,  
Eritrea 2, Morocco 2, Mali 1, Bangladesh 2, Burundian 3,  
Sudan 2, Syria-Iraq 1, Yemen 2, Stateless 1

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