# STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURE

## RECRUITING FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS

## IN MIGRANT COMMUNITIES

**U-CARE Project**

**Unaccompanied Children in Alternative Residence**

August 2022

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# ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|---|---|
| EU | European Union |
| FAB | Fostering Across Borders |
| FBC | Family-based care |
| IOM | International Organization for Migration |
| SOP | Standard Operating Procedure |
| U-CARE | Unaccompanied Children in Alternative Residence |
| UMC | Unaccompanied Migrant Children |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |

# GLOSSARY

**Adoption:** refers to the statutory process of terminating a child's legal rights and duties toward the natural parents and substituting similar rights and duties toward adoptive parents[1].

**Alternative care:** where the child's own family is unable, even with appropriate support, to provide adequate care for the child, or abandons or relinquishes the child, the State is responsible for protecting the rights of the child and ensuring appropriate alternative care, with or through competent local authorities and duly authorized civil society organizations. It is the role of the State, through its competent authorities, to ensure the supervision of the safety, well-being and development of any child placed in alternative care and the regular review of the appropriateness of the care arrangement provided[2]. Alternative care may take the form of: (i) Informal care: any private arrangement provided in a family environment, whereby the child is looked after on an ongoing or indefinite basis by relatives or friends (informal kinship care) or by others in their individual capacity, at the initiative of the child, his/her/their parents or other person without this arrangement having been ordered by an administrative or judicial authority or a duly accredited body; (ii) Formal care: all care provided in a family environment which has been ordered by a competent administrative body or judicial authority, and all care provided in a residential environment, including in private facilities, whether or not as a result of administrative or judicial measures[3].

**Asylum seeker:** is an individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualized procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country in which he or she has submitted it. Not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognized as a refugee, but every recognized refugee is initially an asylum seeker[4].

**Best interest of the child:** is a right, a principle and a rule of procedure with a threefold concept: (a) A substantive right: The right of the child to have his/her/their best interests assessed and taken as a primary consideration (…) and the guarantee that this right will be implemented whenever a decision is to be made concerning a child (…) (b) A fundamental, interpretative legal principle: If a legal provision is open to more than one interpretation, the interpretation which most effectively serves the child's best interests should be chosen. (…) (c) A rule of procedure: Whenever a decision is to be made that will affect a (…) child, the decision-making process must include an evaluation of the possible impact (positive or negative) of the decision on the child/children concerned[5].

**Caregiver:** is a person with whom the child lives who provides daily care to the child, without necessarily implying legal responsibility. The child's customary caregiver is the child's usual caregiver. This person has a parental role but may or may not be related to the child, and may not be the child's legal guardian. In an emergency context, this would typically mean the child's caregiver prior to the emergency[6].

**Child:** is every human being below the age of eighteen years old.

**Child safeguarding:** is the responsibility that organizations have to make sure their staff, operations, and programs do no harm to children, that is that they do not expose children to the risk of harm and abuse, and that any

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[1] 2019 IOM Glossary, Page 7.
[2] 2009 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care for Children, Article 5.
[3] 2009 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care for Children, Article 29.
[4] 2019 IOM Glossary, Page 14.
[5] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), General comment No. 14 (2013) on the right of the child to have his or her best interests taken as a primary consideration, Article 6.
[6] 2019 IOM Glossary, Page 25.

concerns the organization has about children's safety within the communities in which they work, are reported to the appropriate authorities[7].

**Diaspora**: are migrants or descendants of migrants whose identity and sense of belonging, either real or symbolic, have been shaped by their migration experience and background. They maintain links with their homelands, and to each other, based on a shared sense of history, identity, or mutual experiences in the destination country[8].

**Do no harm**: is a principle that has been used in the humanitarian sector but can equally be applied to the development field. It refers to organizations' responsibility to minimize the harm they may be doing inadvertently as a result of their organizational activities[9].

**Family-based care**: is a type of alternative care that involves the child living with a family other than the biological parents. This is a broad term that can include foster care, kinship care and supported child-headed households[10].

**Family reunification**: is directly linked to the right of non-nationals to enter into and reside in a country where their family members reside lawfully or of which they have the nationality in order to preserve the family unit[11]. It also refers to the process of bringing together the child and family or previous care-provider for the purpose of establishing or re-establishing long-term care[12].

**Foster care**: refers to situations where children are placed by a competent authority for the purpose of alternative care in the domestic environment of a family other than the children's own family that has been selected, qualified, approved and supervised for providing such care[13].

**Intercultural mediator**: is, in the migration context, a professional who facilitates the communication (including interpretation) between people speaking different languages and with different cultural backgrounds. Intercultural mediator should not be confused with the term interpreter, as intercultural mediation is a much wider and a more enriched means of communicating messages from sender to receiver than interpreting. They provide information on different sets of value, orientations to life, beliefs, assumptions and socio-cultural conventions by clarifying culture-specific expressions and concepts that might give rise to misunderstanding[14].

**Kinship care**: is family-based care within the child's extended family or with close friends of the family known to the child, whether formal or informal in nature[15]. In some national or local contexts, kinship care will also be considered foster care.

**Legal guardian**: is someone who has the legal authority and duty to care for another's person or property, usually because of the other's incapacity, disability or status as a minor. A guardian may be appointed either for all purposes or for a specific purpose. In the migration context, guardians play a critical role in the protection of unaccompanied or separated migrant children[16].

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[7] Keeping Children Safe, Child Safeguarding Standards and how to implement them, Page 3
[8] IOM's Strategy to Enable, Engage and Empower Diaspora, Page 1.
[9] See footnote 7
[10] 2013 Alternative care in emergency toolkit, Save the Children, Page 11.
[11] 2019 IOM Glossary, Page 72.
[12] 2013 Alternative care in emergency toolkit, Save the Children, Page 14.
[13] 2009 UN Guidelines for the Alternative Care for Children, Article 29.
[14] 2020 EMN Glossary, available at https://ec.europa.eu/home-affairs/what-we-do/networks/european_migration_network/glossary_search/cultural-mediator_en
[15] Idem
[16] 2019 IOM Glossary, Page 124.

**Migrant**: is an umbrella term, not defined under international law, reflecting the common lay understanding of a person who moves away from his or her place of usual residence, whether within a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. The term includes a number of well-defined legal categories of people, such as migrant workers; persons whose particular types of movements are legally defined, such as smuggled migrants; as well as those whose status or means of movement are not specifically defined under international law, such as international students[17].

**Migrant community**: include diasporas, migrants of all genders, also including asylum seekers and refugees, and related organizations in countries of origin and destination[18].

**Network explorer:** is someone who focuses on the development of a network of key figures and who forms a bridge between the key figures and the aid organization. The network explorer enjoys both the trust of the key figures and the mandate to develop a clear and balanced partnership within a professional framework. The tasks of a network explorer are to: follow up with the key figures, share information with diaspora, provide coaching, enable exchange between different associations and communities, to include regular evaluation moment, offer clear terms of reference and keep regular contact with the key people and diaspora.

**Person with a migration/migratory background:** is a person who has: (a) migrated into their present country of residence; and / or (b) previously had a different nationality from their present country of residence; and / or (c) at least one of their parents previously entered their present country of residence as a migrant[19].

**Separated children**: are children, who have been separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from other relatives. These may, therefore, include children accompanied by other adult family members[20].

**Refugee**: A person who qualifies for the protection of the United Nations provided by the High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in accordance with UNHCR's Statute and, notably, subsequent General Assembly's resolutions clarifying the scope of UNHCR's competency, regardless of whether or not he/she/they is in a country that is a party to the 1951 Convention or the 1967 Protocol – or a relevant regional refugee instrument – or whether the person has been recognized by the host country as a refugee under either of these instruments[21].

**Unaccompanied (migrant) children:** also called unaccompanied minors, are children, who have been separated from both parents and other relatives and are not being cared for by an adult who, by law or custom, is responsible for doing so[22]. The EU defines unaccompanied minor as a minor who arrives on the territory of an EU Member unaccompanied by the adult responsible for them by law or by the practice of the EU Member State concerned, and for as long as they are not effectively taken into the care of such a person; or who is left unaccompanied after they have entered the territory of the EU Member State[23].

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[17] 2019 IOM Glossary, Page 132.
[18] migration4development.com/migrant-communities
[19] 2018 EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary, Page 284.
[20] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), General comment No. 6 (2005): Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin, Article 8
[21] 2019 IOM Glossary, Page 170.
[22] UN Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC), General comment No. 6 (2005): Treatment of Unaccompanied and Separated Children Outside their Country of Origin, Article 7.
[23] 2018 EMN Asylum and Migration Glossary, Page 387.

# ABOUT THE PROJECT

The Unaccompanied Children in Alternative Residence *"U-CARE"* project is implemented for a duration of 20 months, from January 2021 until August 2022, and is funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund. The activities are implemented by the International Organization for Migration offices in Belgium (coordinator), Greece and Germany in cooperation with Belgian local partner Pleegzorg Vlaams-Brabant en Brussel and Greek partner ARSIS.

The project aims to develop and improve alternative non-institutionalized care systems for unaccompanied migrant children (UMC) in Belgium, Germany and Greece. Through an inclusive child-centered approach and the exchange of good practices, knowledge and experiences, existing systems and tools will be strengthened which will allow for better support and a more tailored response to the needs of younger and older UMC.

The project focuses on four main activities:
1. **Recruitment of foster care providers to respond to the needs of younger UMC**; a special focus will be on the recruitment of foster care providers with a migration background. To this end, a recruitment campaign and a Standard Operating Procedure document on recruiting foster care providers in migrant communities will be created.
2. **Development of alternative living arrangement prototypes for older UMC**, through the creation of user guides which will allow to apply the prototypes to existing systems.
3. **Training and capacity building** of foster care providers and professionals on caring for UMC, by using, adapting and expanding the training manual developed under the FAB project (2018 – 2019).
4. **Awareness raising and (trans)national exchange** on the topic of alternative care for UMC, through national stakeholder dialogues, thematic workshops and awareness raising sessions.

The goal of the project is to inspire both experienced and less experienced European countries to develop, strengthen and promote alternative care systems, such as family-based care (FBC), as a more appropriate response to the needs of UMC.

# USING THIS GUIDE

This Standard Operation Procedure (SOP) is designed as a sample tool to serve practitioners, working on a local, regional or national level, involved in alternative or family-based care for UMC, with a particular focus on those currently recruiting and working with foster care providers, as well as those who are interested in setting up a recruitment campaign for foster care providers with a migration background. This SOP therefore serves both experienced and less-experienced professionals working in foster care organizations. This document is also for government actors and management who wish to integrate culturally sensitive foster care into their own work.

The focus of the SOP is to provide practical guidance in developing a recruitment campaign that aims to engage with and mobilize migrant communities for foster care for UMC. The document will explore various methods of recruitment, propose principles to apply when recruiting foster care providers with a migration background and will conclude with some key recommendations. This SOP pays particular attention to the "key figure" method as a particularly effective recruitment technique within migrant communities and provides the reader with a step-by-step guide for this method.

This SOP does not aim to provide an exhaustive list of recruitment techniques nor a one-size-fits-all solution; different contexts require different recruitment methods.

**Section 1** describes some general concepts and remarks that recruiters will need to consider when recruiting foster families in migrant communities. The section will also focus on how and what to communicate with regards to foster care. Finally, in the section the obstacles and risks linked to the recruitment of foster families with a migration background will be tackled.

In **Section 2** the reader will be provided with a list of recruitment methods that can be used to reach out to potential foster care providers with a migration background. Special attention will go to the "key figure" recruitment method, for which a step-by-step guide is included.

**Section 3** will elaborate on some key questions a recruiter should answer before starting his/her/their recruitment activities. These questions will be essentials in developing a recruitment plan, which will help to formulate clear goals, strategies and concrete activities, as well as to mitigate obstacles and analyze what works and what does not.

At the end of the SOP, there is a bibliography with references to studies, research and interesting material that were used in the writing of this document.

# INTRODUCTION

Migrant children under the age of 20 years old accounted for 14,6% of the total migrant population in 2022[24] (IOM, 2022). The absolute numbers of children in migration has risen steadily since 2000; a similar trend can be noted in recent years for those children traveling unaccompanied by parents and/or guardians. Eurostat revealed that in 2021 around 23.200 asylum seekers applying for international protection in the EU member states were considered to be unaccompanied minors. These children are often exposed to risks of child trafficking, exploitation, disappearance and various forms of neglect, abuse and violence, both within and outside the EU. These risks are exacerbated when the children find themselves in inadequate conditions in overcrowded facilities with adult strangers and without adjusted services (such as health, education, psychosocial support, ill-trained staff members). Moreover, the prevalence of child disappearances is higher in reception facilities than in appropriate alternative care systems.

The European Union Agency for Fundamental Rights[25], the Council of Europe[26], other EU institutions[27] and many international organizations state that family-based care and small-scale alternative care systems should be prioritized in line with existing child protection standards and guidelines. The reasons are obvious: aside from the risks mentioned above, living isolated from a supportive family environment in unsuitable reception centers can cause physical, psychological, emotional and social harm, which can be intensified by the lack of adequate services and protection.

Research[28] has indeed shown that UMC living in foster care, with family members or in other placements with dedicated support have better mental health outcomes (for mental health problems, such as depression symptoms, trauma symptoms, behavioral problem) than those children living alone or in large-scale detention centers. Both researchers and practitioners tend to assume that family foster care is a better placement option compared to living alone or in large scale centers, because it offers a context with increased protective factors such as: support figures, friends, follow-up and guidance in education, feelings of security through personalized care, stability, reduced isolation, and the ability to form new attachments.

Foster care has often been put forward as a preferred care option especially for younger UMC, whose needs can differ from the needs and wishes of older UMC. The latter may benefit more from or show more interest for a transition to an autonomous life, thus small-scare care options, such as semi-independent living, buddy programs, etc. can be more suitable for them. Many factors play a role in choosing a suitable foster care family for the UMC, whose views and wishes are the primary points of consideration. Even though research has been scarce and the findings are inconclusive, it has often been argued that culture and religion are important factors for a successful placement and that therefore culturally matching foster families can be considered a significant added value for the UMC. Consultations conducted in the framework of the U-CARE project with diaspora communities, social workers, foster families and UMC, currently residing within foster families or in reception centers, looked to complement scare research and discussed reasons and obstacles to step into a foster care journey (see U-CARE's Analysis Report[29]).

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[24] 2022 IOM's World Migration Report, chapter 1, p. 40.
[25] See https://fra.europa.eu/sites/default/files/fra_uploads/fra-2016-libe_missing_children_21_april_2016_background_note.pdf
[26] See https://www.coe.int/en/web/children/alternative-care
[27] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32013L0033&from=ENU
[28] Please refer to the bibliography for all relevant research used for writing the report
[29] 2022 IOM's Analysis Rapport: consultations on foster care, see
https://belgium.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1286/files/documents/d2.2-analysis-report-foster-care-fgd-website.pdf

Despite the potential benefits and the importance of leaving UMC the option to be culturally matched if they wish to, recruiting foster families with a migration background has proven not to be an easy task. Many European countries indeed struggle to recruit foster care providers in these communities, often with disappointing results. The consultations and operational activities under the U-CARE project brought important insights that will improve the recruitment process of foster families, as well as the general operation of foster care agencies, such as Pleegzorg Vlaanderen (the Foster Care Agency in Flanders (Belgium)). This SOP seeks to consolidate these insights and will therefore offer general guidelines and tools to those care organizations who understand the benefits of culturally matching foster families and are looking to recruit foster families with a migration background.

© IOM, 2022
Fun afternoon during the Pleegzorg World Café for (future)
foster families and UMC

# SECTION 1 - GENERAL CONCEPTS

Foster care is an enriching experience with fulfilling results, as an impact is made in the life of a child in need of support and care. From a rights-based approach, foster families are contributing to the realization of the UMC's rights, and contribute overall to the realization of their dignity and well-being. The best interest of the child should always be the primary consideration when designing a recruitment campaign and be at the heart of any foster relationship. Due to the fact that fostering is a challenging journey, several risks need to be considered in order to have a positive impact on the recruitment process, but also to minimize potential negative effects on a child's life and maximize the benefits of the intervention (*do no harm*).

Moreover, professionals working at foster care agencies do not necessarily share the same language or culture as the foster parents they support or target. The need for care organizations to increase their efforts by adopting a culture-sensitive approach is imminent if they want to ensure high-quality and accessible services. The recruitment of foster care providers within migrant communities indeed poses different challenges which require a different approach. Many care organizations have been faced with obstacles and disappointing results when recruiting in migrant communities. Recruitment methods, locations of recruitment, approach, information sharing, outreach activities, compensation: these are just a few of the aspects that will need rethinking and the attention of the care organization in order to ensure a successful recruitment campaign within migrant communities.

Before presenting the various recruitment methods and setting up a recruitment plan, this section will provide some general remarks that recruiters will need to consider when recruiting foster families in migrant communities. The section also will discuss some of the risks and obstacles linked to the recruitment of foster families with a migration background.

## 1.1 GENERAL REMARKS ON RECRUITING

✓ First and foremost, recruiting contributes to the wellbeing, safeguarding, dignity and overall human rights of children in migration. The needs and **best interest of the child**, as well as child safeguarding principles should be at the core of the recruitment strategy and the interventions of the care agency.

✓ The recruitment of foster care providers is an ongoing process that requires building trust and continuous **investments in terms of time, resources and training of staff**. Recruitment efforts are often carried out with varying degrees of success and the results often only manifest themselves in the long run.

✓ Gaining access to migrant groups requires **cross-cultural competencies** (i.e. communication skills, cross-cultural intelligence) and genuine interest in the person and his/her/their background. It is important to be a reliable professional, who is open and willing to learn It could be helpful to cooperate during the recruitment with "intercultural mediators" as they have a thorough and inside information about the conceptions or possible misconceptions about foster care within the target community and can clarify the culture of the organization and the individual. They can help to "translate" in two directions; from your organization towards the migrant community and the other way around so the communication and understanding happens on a shared level, hereby helping to build trust between two parties. This connection is not only found by involving a professional, but also involving someone who enjoys the trust of the community or group can create a feeling of trust.

✓ First outreach efforts may not immediately generate positive reactions from potential families. In first instance, there maybe be **reluctance or even refusal** to engage with foster care recruiters. The latter

should open the floor for an open, honest conversation to find out what the barriers are or what the reasons for the reluctant attitude is. This will help the recruiter to address these barriers or worries and to maybe even pave the way for recruiting a new foster family.

✓ In relation to the former point, the recruiter should always consider and be understanding of the doubts, insecurities or fears of interested families or potential care providers. The recruiter should in this case identify the main concerns of interested families and potential care providers, while **emphasizing the positive aspects** of becoming a foster care provider: what can becoming a foster care provider mean for you (e.g. a goal in life, making a difference, etc.)? (*see next point: communication about foster care*).

✓ Contact potential foster families yourself instead of waiting for them to do it. Being aware of the **right timing** is important: try to reach out to a person or a group at a later date if their priorities are different at that time.

✓ The **attitude and the responsiveness** of the care organization has proven to be an important factor in recruiting, especially if relying on "word of mouth" or "peer to peer" recruitment. The organization, therefore, has to be well organized, give quick responses, be welcoming, listen to the needs and concerns of foster families, take an objective and nondiscriminatory approach, etc.

✓ It is important to keep track and regularly **monitor** the recruitment activities and its results, as to distinguish which ones are productive (in which context) and which ones are not.

✓ The recruitment of cultural families is a challenging task, which is best taken up as a team and not individually. It is therefore important that several employees are made available for this task by the organization. **Working as a team** allows you to brainstorm together, evolve and put different forces together. Moreover, recruitment is a slow and energy-consuming process, so having a team of employees who continue to motivate each other is beneficial.

✓ Actively focusing on involving people with a migration background in care services is not an obvious task. It requires **willingness, support and additional efforts** from the organization (or at least of people in key positions) to be successful in involving people with a migration background. This requires, first of all, awareness about the fact that the organization and its procedures are made -in the majority of cases- for a mainstream audience and can thus create (additional) barriers for minority groups. In the next step, the organization should consider developing or strengthening their policy of inclusion, mainstreaming diversity in policies and practices, setting up a working group and/or a declaration of diversity. Furthermore, it is important that everyone is on board to make additional efforts to include minority groups. It is therefore recommended to regularly sit down with employees at different levels to discuss the evolution of the project as well as any doubts or resistance. In this sense, it is also important that everyone is convinced about the added value and benefits of recruiting foster care providers with a migration background.

✓ When the recruitment efforts successfully lead to an increase in registrations of people with a migration backgrounds within your care organization, the real work actually begins. The question is not only how to bring them to your organization, but also **how to keep (potential) foster carers involved**. In this regards, it is important to continue to coordinate well with key figures and with the individuals themselves. It is important to bear in mind that the move to your organization was not always obvious to them, and has demanded a *leap of faith*. Therefore, extra efforts should be made to give them a warm welcome. A culturally sensitive approach must also be ensured in their further trajectory.

## 1.2 COMMUNICATING ABOUT FOSTER CARE

Foster care is for many people -with and without a migration background alike- an unknown concept. Many indeed do not know what is expected from foster care providers, what foster care entails, which children are in need of care and what are their needs, what caring for UMC really means, and what kind of (financial) support and guidance will be offered to foster care providers. It is therefore important, when communicating, to think about the message you want to convey for more efficiency and impact, also to avoid overwhelming your target population. The right message will engage and keep your audiences motivated, while being clear on the expectations and roles. Here are some key messages that could be useful when reaching out to potential foster care candidates.

- ✔ Make the **expectations** for foster care providers clear from the start so that there are no misconceptions. What is most important is that the families are open to meet the needs of the child. The three following points below address the most important misconceptions about foster care.
- ✔ Explain **what foster care is** and make the differences with adoption clear: foster care is rather an unprecedented concept for many families with a migration background. For example, in certain cultures there may be an understanding that adoption is forbidden in their religion. Moreover, in certain cultures it is expected that women should adopt certain practices (i.e. wear hijab/niqab in some Muslim communities) in the presence of older boys. That is why it is very important to continue to express the difference between adoption and foster care, as well as to engage key stakeholders (such a religious or community leaders) who could clarify the respective prescriptions based on culture, religion, etc..
- ✔ Some people may be looking to take in a young child and some clearly express their wish to have a girl. These expectations, however, do not match the general situation of **UMC**, who, in general terms, are **often boys and adolescents**, some in their transition to adulthood.
- ✔ Most UMCs have a family back home and some are waiting for family reunification. Make potential foster families conscious about this fact and express the need to take up **more of a coaching or mentoring role** than a parenting role. It is important that also after the recruitment phase the expectations from the UMC and their family back home is clear for the foster family.
- ✔ Although many become a foster care providers out of **altruism** (and should be overall one of the key considerations), **financial compensation** could be mentioned, especially when it is offered to cover the needs of the UMC. In some countries, such as the United Kingdom, an additional fee is being rewarded to recognize the work of foster care providers, which enables families with less financial means to become a foster care provider.
- ✔ Many foster families are motivated to "**make a difference to a child's life**" and consider children's happiness as a personal life goal. Do not hesitate to put this incentive in the spotlight in your fostering agency's marketing materials, alongside other "soft" benefits of becoming a foster care provider such as the emotional reward. From a rights-based perspective, foster families are indeed contributing to the **realization of the UMC's rights**, and contribute overall to the realization of their dignity and well-being.
- ✔ Capitalize on the **community's sense of responsibility**. The message that they are needed in finding a solution for children of their community can indeed be an important motivator. Furthermore, for some diaspora members taking care of a UMC can also be a way of giving back to their home country.

- ✓ In addition, point out the **added value of foster families with a migration background**, for example, with regard to the identity development of the foster child. The importance and benefits of culturally matching families for the wellbeing of the UMC should be highlighted. Moreover, the bridging role can also not be underestimated, as being integrated in the country or being a diaspora enables families with a migration background to guide UMC in the balancing exercise between preserving the culture of the country of origin and openness to the culture of the country of arrival.
- ✓ Diversify your approach of communication and especially the messages you want to convey, as "**different things motivate different people**". While some women may be more sensitive to a message of altruism or making a difference in a child's life, men may be more interested in the pragmatic side of fostering (i.e. "will I be able to cover the needs of a foster child in addition to that of my family?"). Even though it is important to not generalize and (gender) stereotype, do consider including multiple messages in your recruitment campaign that can relate to different people.
- ✓ Part of the message to potential foster care providers could be to specify some of the **considerations**, as described below, that care organizations take into account when recruiting foster families.

| Cross-cultural skills | Migration background |
|---|---|
| Foster families for unaccompanied children need to be culturally sensitive, which means that they are sincerely interested in the child's background, habits and life in the home country, the child's current plans, and the plans and expectations of their parents or family. It also means that strange or confusing behavior or habits will lead to conversation and questions rather than judgement and rejection.<br><br>The foster families are expected to be aware of their own norms, values and codes of conduct, and to learn the (culturally specific) norms, values and codes of conduct of the child, making a distinction between opinions and facts.<br><br>Families with a migration background are not a guarantee of cultural sensitivity. These families should also be open to allow other religious and cultural experiences. Foster families have an important role to play in helping with/smoothing the transition to the UMC's new culture.<br><br>Language skills are an important factor in recruitment and matching. Especially in the first months of a placement, communication between the child and the foster family is important.<br><br>Misunderstandings may easily occur. If there is no match with the child's language, use of an interpreter is often necessary to explain things and to understand the child. | According to experiences in some European countries, taking care of unaccompanied children works out best in foster families with a migration background, preferably from the same country of origin, similar cultural background, or at least, in families that have intercultural skills.<br><br>A migration background makes people sensitive – including in the third generation after migration – to the effects of flight and resettlement of children who had to leave their family and homeland. These people may also have experiences with racism and discrimination, which can be an added value for UMC confronted with the same issues. However, these experiences can also create a barrier for families as they do not feel ready to deal with these painful experiences UMC may suffer from.<br><br>Placement with people not necessarily from the same country of origin but with a migration background, therefore, has definite advantages. It seems obvious that children will benefit from the fact that they can feel safe in an environment where they are able to speak their own language and where they feel comfortable about the food, the smells and habits.<br><br>The ethnic foster family can be seen as a transitional space from which the child can step into the new environment and experience it but can also refer to what they know and maintain their cultural identity.<br><br>Foster families with a migration background are expected to be integrated in society and speak their new language reasonably well. This would in general be the |

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| Contact with the biological family | Religion |
|---|---|
| case for foster families that have been living in the country for a period of at least two years.<br><br>The U-CARE consultations also made clear that some diaspora groups consider these UMC as "their children" and feel like they are best placed to take care of them.[30] | |

| Contact with the biological family | Religion |
|---|---|
| The foster family must be interested in the biological family of the child and willing to try to give absent parents or family a place in the child's daily life. This should preferably lead to contact with family by telephone or social media, and permission from the parents to stay with the foster family.<br><br>The family can then be informed about the well-being of the child and about the actual situation in the new country.<br><br>A child wants to be loyal to their parents. It can be very helpful if the child's absent parents or other family can also be asked for advice in difficult situations or when choices must be made. Involving absent parents or family makes the child feel supported, choices are easier to make, and the foster family can anticipate on what kind of parenting the child is used to.<br><br>At the same time, the child's situation can be explained to the absent biological parents or family. They can be reassured about the well-being of the child in the new situation. The parents can then help the child by giving them realistic expectations that will prevent emotional stress. | The child has the right to practice its own religion and must feel free to do so.<br><br>Religion can be very important for a good match between the foster family and the child, because children often feel supported by their religion and sharing the same religion with the foster family may be essential.<br><br>Organizations can expect from foster families that they support the child in their religious needs, and that they accept it when the child does not feel the same need or even no need to live a religious life. In this sense, it is important to be very careful with recruitment in groups that are fanatically (possibly extreme) political or religious.<br><br>Religion may also be important to the absent parents, enabling them to accept the foster family taking care of their child.<br><br>At the same time, it is important to consider that some children may have fled their home community because of religious norms and do therefore not wish to be placed in a religious family. |

| Sustainability | Pedagogical and nurturing skills |
|---|---|
| Placement sustainability is also an important issue when recruiting foster families.<br><br>The recruitment plan should therefore also aim at recruiting foster care providers from different age groups that are suitable for taking care of children from different age groups.<br><br>Moving children should be avoided as much as possible. It should also be the intention of the foster family to take care of the child until they turn 18, and preferably until the child has grown up.<br><br>Nevertheless, recruitment of short-term families may often be useful, for instance for temporary placement of children who have asked for family reunification, or for children who need emergency shelter. | Foster families should have basic pedagogical and nurturing skills that fit the age-related needs of the child. But they will also have to take the child's background, life events and experiences into consideration in their approach.<br><br>The family should have some experience with the age-related needs of the child, perhaps by having raised children of their own. All of this must be investigated during the screening and should be monitored during the placement. |

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[30] https://belgium.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1286/files/documents/d2.2-analysis-report-foster-care-fgd-website.pdf

SOP – Recruiting foster care providers in migrant communities

| Composition of the foster family | Rainbow families |
|---|---|
| To ideally match the specific needs of a child, it is important that recruitment investigates the need to recruit foster families with a specific composition, for example, the age of the parents themselves (there is a minimum age of 21 for foster parents in all European countries) and the number of children and their ages.<br><br>Recruitment should also aim at having a variety in the availability of families. These families must, however, always have an adequate level of integration in society and sufficient financial resources. If sufficient resources are not available, the care organization can consider to give a fee (for the work done as a foster carer) in addition to a compensation (to cover the needs of the child) as is done in the United Kingdom. | In many countries all over the world, being lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) is a taboo topic, not accepted or even a crime. Consequently, particular attention should be paid to these situations.<br><br>This can mean that the child's family will not support the placement, and may then lead to loyalty issues. Decisions on these kind of placements therefore have to be carefully considered and only made in agreement with the child and if possible their family. |

## 1.3 OPPORTUNITIES TO OVERCOME OBSTACLES IN OUTREACH AND RECRUITMENT

As mentioned earlier, the process of recruiting foster care providers is one of continuous efforts that do not always generate the positive results that care organizations hope for. There are various particularities linked to working with migrant communities that can hinder the outreach and recruitment of foster care providers with a migration background when ignored by the foster care organization. Being conscious about these obstacles and proactively thinking about ways to avoid or moderate them as well as including these in your recruitment plan (*see section 3*) will have a positive impact on the outreach and recruitment results. Below we will specify how to overcome some of the main obstacles observed by researchers and practitioners when reaching out to and recruiting within migrant communities.

- ✓ Be aware about the possible **distrust, suspicion and skepticism** of some migrant communities towards social workers, official or governmental organizations. Especially when it comes to foster care, there can be the misconception that the social workers of the foster care organization can take away the family's own children or have strong negative opinions about the family's pedagogical methods. Communicate clearly on your role and responsibilities as a social worker. Approach families unbiased and with cultural sensitivity. Recognize that gaining trust and cooperation will demand additional efforts, time, and even training (i.e. cross-cultural communication, diversity and gender mainstreaming, etc.).
- ✓ Clearly explain the procedure, timeline and goals of the assessment process and provide support in the administrative processes. The lengthy and sometimes intrusive assessment processes may generate **a feeling of control,** of being interrogated and not "being worthy or enough" to be a foster care provider. The care organization should also consider the possibility of a more independent (internal/external) support and control mechanism, which will allow potential foster care providers who are unhappy with the treatment or support from their assigned social worker, to express their dissatisfaction. In the long run, this additional measure will be beneficial, as foster families are often recruited through word-of-mouth.
- ✓ Engage theologists, scholars or religious community leaders in countering cultural or religious misconceptions with regards to fostering. As explained before, theological or cultural

**misinterpretations and prescriptions** can be a barrier in some cultural contexts or religious communities to foster. Showcasing good practices of how other foster families deal with cultural (i.e. also linked to verbal and/or non-verbal communication, body language) or religious prescriptions matter could also be a way to counter this obstacle.

✓ Raise people's **awareness** on the social care system, the objectives of foster care and the overall situation and needs of UMC. The **lack of knowledge** can lead to people not engaging in foster care or dropping out when the UMC situation and needs are finally explained to them. Some people sign up for foster care thinking of taking care of a baby; however, UMC are mostly older boys. Unclear expectations can lead to drop outs in the recruitment procedure.

✓ The **perception of older unaccompanied migrant boys** within the general public, even those with a similar cultural background or coming from the same country of origin, is quite negative. Prejudices and generalizations ("all migrant boys are criminals") amplified by negative stories in the media can make people fearful and anxious of fostering older migrant boys. The latter can also be seen as a threat to the female household members (daughter(s), wife). Be conscious about these prejudices as they may be the reason for refusing to engage in foster care. Showcase positive or success stories and include testimonies from foster families in your recruitment campaign, but also explain the possibility of introductory meetings in order to get to know the UMC and the dynamics within the foster family.

✓ When the message of your recruitment campaign is convincing some members of the family, but not all, this could jeopardize the continuation of the recruitment and selection procedure. It is important to have **all family members on board**. Spend extra attention to those family members who do not feel comfortable or motivated to foster and address the reasons why. Make sure that family members know that the engagement of all members is necessary to proceed with the foster care application.

✓ Practical considerations, sometimes linked to legal **requirements for fostering**, such as adequate housing, having a separate room, difficulty to obtain travel documents for a UMC, sufficient financial means to foster, not living off of social allowances, may be a huge obstacle for families who want to foster. People who struggle financially, but with a desire to foster, therefore, see themselves stranded in the assessment procedure. Communicate honestly from the start on these requirements to avoid disappointment. Developing a clear recruitment plan can avoid recruiting people who do not meet these requirements. Foster agencies should also have a look at practical requirements that can add (unnecessary) barriers. Some UMC, for example, do not mind and even prefer to share a bedroom with siblings.

✓ Linked to the previous point is the lack of sufficient compensation for fostering. Having an allowance to cover the costs of the child, combined with a "volunteering fee" (i.e. the United Kingdom) or the provision of housing (i.e. family homes in Norway) can actually be a driver for people, including those who are mostly faced with practical or financial obstacles, to foster. Establishing a **fair compensation system** that at least allows to cover the costs of fostering a child is therefore recommended.

✓ People with a migration background do not always feel related to the message or **language** used in outreach activities. Make sure to translate the information in the most common languages and avoid using technical words, for example, linked to social work jargon.

✓ Foster care organizations often require foster care families to have a good understanding of and **integration** in the host community. For recent or newly arrived families, this is not always evident. Developing a clear recruitment plan can avoid recruiting people who do not meet these requirements In case newly arrived families are considered for foster placement (i.e. kinship care)

provide additional training and information that will benefit the integration of the foster family and the UMC. Note that during the U-CARE consultations, some UMC indicated they did not want to be in a foster family with a migration background, believing that this would hamper their integration (language, social network, administration, racism). These fears are often incorrect[31].

✓ Social workers do not always possess necessary **cross-cultural competencies**; they can be biased by misconceptions on the language skills or cultural habits of the families. This can sometimes lead to an early rejection of interested foster care providers, who do not "tick all the boxes" or seem to have "strange habits". Moreover, the way of communicating (i.e. body language, direct versus indirect) can be heavily subject to cultural differences, which can be a turnoff for both social workers and potential foster carers. Consider working with intercultural mediators and/or providing social workers with additional training for cultural sensitive outreach, which could be helpful in a correct and unbiased assessment of the candidates' ability to become foster parents.

## 1.4  RISKS OF RECRUITING FOSTER CARE PROVIDERS WITH A MIGRATION BACKGROUND

So far, the report has focused mainly on the added value of placements with foster care providers with a migration background, including those who come from the same country of origin or religion. However, it is important to also reflect on, analyze and take into account the risks linked to the placement of a UMC within a foster family with a same or similar cultural background. This will allow the care organization to prepare mitigating measures or to avoid placements within certain families in specific contexts.

Even though some studies[32] on the topic -which are rather scarce and inconclusive- suggest that culturally matched placements are preferable to cross-cultural placements, because of better (mental) health, more meaningful social interactions, the feeling of continuity, more positive self-identity, a sense of belonging, and the ease of speaking the same language or practicing the same beliefs or habits, there are also counterarguments to these kind of placements in certain circumstances. Some UMC may, for example, have fled their community of origin because of social customs (i.e. FGM, child marriage, punishment of LGBTQI+ persons) and do not feel comfortable being placed in a family with similar cultural background or who may have a link to the community of origin they escaped from. UMC may also suffer from traumas directly linked to the behavior of human traffickers, which can lead to a firm rejection by the UMC of aspects, such as religion or ethnicity, that they link to the human traffickers. They would therefore prefer to not be in a foster family with a migration background. For families who themselves have only settled recently in the country, taking care of a (related) foster child may be an extra burden: with a limited social network, lack of knowledge on local administrative procedures, other, more pressing issues, such as housing, and the risk of not being allowed to stay in the country, the placement is rather risky and may generate negative outcomes for the UMC. Care organizations also have to be careful with recruiting foster care providers who are fanatically (dogmatic) religious or political, as this can have an impact on the UMC development and integration process.

Focus group discussions[33] have learned us that there are different motivations why a UMC want or do not want to be placed in a foster family with a migration background. We mention below some of the reasons voiced by consulted UMC and careleavers:

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[31] https://belgium.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1286/files/documents/d2.2-analysis-report-foster-care-fgd-website.pdf
[32] See bibliography for relevant studies on the topic
[33] 2022 IOM's Analysis Report: consultations on foster care

- The information about foster care is not sufficiently available for UMC and therefore misinformation or the lack of information all together latter may lead to reluctance with the UMC to be placed in a foster family.
- Not only families, but also UMC can have stereotypes and prejudices: are these families trustworthy, can they take care of me or themselves, can I develop freely my identity as a youngster, can they understand me, will they be able to help me with my integration process, will I be able to learn the mother tongue of the country sufficiently?
- Indeed, UMC can believe that social and financial capital are more limited with families with a migration background, which they believe can hamper their integration process. Indeed, some people with a migration background may be single mothers or fathers who are trying to deal with their own difficulties (i.e. discrimination on the labor market) and family reunification journey ahead of them. Often, they have had to leave family behind and experience discrimination, which makes an engagement as foster carer difficult.
- Cultural and religious differences can cause discussions, misunderstandings and fears. Some believe it is their right to preserve their culture when others actually try to break with their cultural or religious background.
- Staying with foster families who have a similar background than the UMC may cause internal struggles, as they feel like it impacts the loyalty towards their parents.
- Some cultural or religious laws and customs can make a foster care journey uncomfortable for UMC and foster family: some UMC are considered to be an adult at the age of 15/16 and feel the pressure to be independent. In some cultures/religions, additional safeguards need to be taken by women when an older boy, who is not a family member, comes to live with them (i.e. wearing headscarf). Furthermore, some UMC are sent abroad with a very particular motivation which is not consistent with a foster care story.

Other researchers[34] have correctly pointed out the danger of overly simplifying the process of "cultural matching" whereby different cultures or expressions of culture are not considered. Drammeh (2019) asks pertinent questions in this regard: "What culture? Whose culture? Who defines it and how? Is this about simplistic labels and stereotypes such as country of origin, religion or ethnicity?". People that come from the same country indeed does not mean that they are culturally the same.

Although UMC and birth parents back home attach great importance to their culture, which in times of loss provided a feeling of continuity, some studies[35] showed that were in general satisfied with the foster parents, regardless of their cultural background. Retaining a link with their mother tongue and culture were indeed important but this was not always decisive for placement success. Some UMC stated that the relationship with and personality of the foster parent were the most important factor; and they attached importance to foster parents who respected their cultural background. Other youngsters also indicated that they learned the language of the host country quicker when residing with long-term residents.

Regardless of the possible advantages and disadvantages, the individual needs and wishes of the UMC alongside culture, must be the central consideration, as enshrined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (i.e. Article 3; Article 30). Several researchers[36] state that the type of placement had an impact on

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[34] Arnold, Horgan, Ní Raghallaigh & Sirriyeh, Drammeh (see bibliography)
[35] Ni Raghallaigh, 2013; Wade et al., 2012
[36] Ni Raghallaigh Sirriyeh, Wade.

forming cultural identity, but that it should not be forgotten that the UMC themself plays an important role. UMC actively shape their identity and seek ways of dealing with the complexity of living in different cultural contexts. It is indeed important to bear in mind that the concepts of culture, belief and identity are dynamic and change over time.

SECTION 2

METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

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World Café organized by Pleegzorg bringing together (future) foster families and UMC.

# SECTION 2 - METHODS OF RECRUITMENT

It is important to note that there is no one-size-fits-all solution and that different contexts and different people will require different approaches and methods of recruitment. Choosing one method does therefore not imply excluding other methods. It is recommended to diversify methods, but also to regularly monitor and evaluate used methods. This will allow to draw conclusions on what works in which context (and what does not), but also to foresee and mitigate possible challenges during the recruitment campaign. These potential obstacles and risks should be assessed from the start of the campaign, when developing the recruitment plan.

Before going into the practical side of setting up a recruitment plan, we will have a look at several methods for recruiting foster families. The SOP will dedicate an elaborate chapter on the "key figure" method, including a step-by-step guide, because of its particular relevance for recruiting foster families in migrant communities.

## 2.1. RECRUITMENT WITHIN THE UMC NETWORK - KINSHIP PLACEMENT[37]

A first option is to ask the child or, if possible, the parents/family in the country of origin whether they have family or acquaintances living in the host country. Sometimes children have an address or telephone number of family members who are situated in the host country. In this case, recruiting starts by contacting this family member or acquaintance to verify whether they can accommodate their young relative. The aim of the exploratory phase is to check the possibilities and commitment of the family, as well as to determine the needs of the child. If this results in a positive outcome, the screening procedure can start.

In case the child is already staying with kinship carers, or has re-entered the related family member after a temporary interruption, the focus should be on continuity of the parenting situation, including continuation of the secure relationship between the child and the carer. Screening will therefore focus on assessing whether that relationship and the parenting situation are sufficiently safe; or, at least, whether it is safe enough while the child waits for reunification with their biological parents, if reunification is foreseen. To be able to make this assessment, close observation of the interaction between the child and the family is an important source of information. The level of sensitivity of the carers and the responsiveness of the child, in particular, will provide information on the quality of the attachment. Furthermore, commitment regarding the placement is a necessary prerequisite – between the child, the reception family, absent family and the guardian.

Continuity of the parenting situation does not play a role in case the related family has not yet taken care of the child. A certain degree of attachment and connection may, however, already exist. Moreover, the child's interests with regards to being placed in their own network has to be part of the screening. The commitment of all those involved is of equal importance in this situation.

Placement within a related family is not always an advantage or preferred option. Those families who have only recently settled in the new country or are still in the asylum procedure may not yet have fully recovered from their own flight, are not yet integrated in society and have other concerns, such as settling down, finding housing, taking care of their own children's needs, etc. Unless there has been a prior agreement or commitment with the UMC's family to take in the relative UMC (kinship care), it is not recommended to actively recruit asylum-seeking families. Aside from the reasons mentioned before (concerns with settling

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[37] Not all contexts consider kinship placement as foster care; please refer to national or local legislation and guidelines.

down, finding housing, financial situation), there is also the risk of having to disrupt a placement, which should be avoided for the best interest of the child. The recruitment of asylum-seeking families will therefore not be discussed within the scope of this SOP.

Family members are also frequently expected to take responsibility regardless of whether they are capable of doing so. The circumstances under which the reception family lives is not necessarily beneficial for the development of the child, adapted to his/her/their needs or pose a threat to the safety of the child. The screening of the kinship care providers is an important tool to avoid these kind of situations or to identify the need of additional support. The latter is indeed necessary in situations where the UMC stays with an older brother or nephew, who themselves arrived to the country as a UMC and can now be considered as an aged-out UMC. Even though this is not necessarily viewed as "the conventional foster family", it can provide a familiar safe haven for the UMC. These situations demand additional guidance and extra focus from the foster care agency.

## 2.2. RECRUITMENT THROUGH INFORMATION SESSIONS

Information sessions serve to inform people truthfully about the context and the needs of unaccompanied minors, to explain them the concept, importance and necessity of their help in the form of foster care and to clearly indicate what kind of support they can expect from the organization.

The basic information on foster care that will be provided during the session has to be tailored to the needs and questions of the target audience, which can be different when targeting families with or without a migration background. It is therefore also important to convey information in a culturally and religiously sensitive way. If necessary, the information session can be provided in the most common language of the target audience and an intercultural mediator can be included in the preparation of delivery of the information session. Please refer to section 1.2. for recommendations on how to reach out and engage with migrant communities on the topic of foster care.

Information sessions can be held in a variety of places and in cooperation with various stakeholders. Here listed are several options for information sessions:
- at church communities or mosques;
- within NGOs or volunteering activities;
- within migrant/diaspora associations,
- at schools
- in sports clubs, etc.

The location, date/timing (i.e. observance of religious holidays) and content of the meetings should be adapted to the target groups as indicated in the recruitment plan. Information sessions can be given by the foster care organization, but also by or in cooperation with existing foster care families (see 2.3), community associations (see 2.4) or key figures (see 2.5).

It is also necessary to keep in mind how certain communities position themselves towards the concept of gender. Keep in mind that in certain communities men and women are more comfortable with separate encounters. This could provide a better sense of security and opportunity to talk openly about certain (difficult) topics. An information session can, for example, be held in collaboration with women (support) groups.

## 2.3. PEER-TO-PEER OR WORD-OF-MOUTH RECRUITMENT

From the consultations, it became clear that the traditional recruitment process does not necessarily work for families with a migration background. Word-of-mouth campaigns and setting up a space for dialogue are considered to be more successful in diaspora communities and this is where key figures can play an important role as well.

Active foster care providers can indeed be included in the organization's recruitment efforts, by asking them to share their experiences and skills at information meetings with friends, family or neighbors who might be interested in becoming foster families; to be a speaker at an information session (see 2.2); or to actively recruit other families. Given the importance of word-of-mouth recruitment, the care organization has an important role in giving excellent services and support to current foster care families, as they will be the ones talking to family and friends on their experiences.

Furthermore, make sure there is diverse recruitment material with information in multiple languages on a diversity of topics (such as financial aspects, guidance, foster care selection process). Ideally, word-of-mouth recruitment should be combined with recruitment material, such as flyers and (social media) video's (see 2.6), on which potential foster carers can rely to when in search of further information.

Included under this point is the active recruitment of former kinship care providers as new foster care providers. This means that former kinship care providers are recruited to become new foster care providers for unaccompanied children who are not a relative, close friend or an acquaintance.

## 2.4. RECRUITMENT THROUGH RELEVANT ASSOCIATIONS

An important step in reaching the relevant audience for your recruitment campaign is to get an idea of the existing associations and individuals (see "recruitment through key figures" under 2.5) in the targeted communities. After this initial mapping phase, a selection can be made of associations and individuals who show potential for cooperation.

These associations and people can be identified in different ways:

- Diversity workers from the government;
- List of cultural/community/diaspora associations at umbrella associations;
- Associations or projects that also work with migrant communities, refugees or on the topic of integration;
- Through people with a migration background who have already been in contact with your organization;
- Tips from colleagues, acquaintances, intercultural mediators, religious/community leaders, care workers with a migration background.

Not every association can be considered suitable for the objective of recruiting foster care providers with a migration background. Here are three considerations that can help in determining whether it is a suitable association for your target group and objectives:

- Similar core task: the best partner association are those whose core mission is closely linked to your own organization. This increases the chances of finding a shared agenda.

- Similar target audience: it is important that the association focus on a similar target audience. Many cultural organizations aim at the emancipation of vulnerable groups (e.g. illiterate men and women, homeless people). This is not necessarily the target audience you are looking for as an organization. Nevertheless, volunteers who regularly work with asylum seekers, job seeking newcomers and people in precarious living conditions may be interested in also taking up the role of foster care provider or legal guardian.
- Repetition: when the name of a particular association is mentioned multiple times when talking to different people, such as colleagues, friends, key figures, foster families, legal guardians, etc. it can be assumed that this could be a relevant actor to reach out to.

Once a suitable association is identified, first contacts should be established. This can be through contacting the board members or by attending an event organized by the organization. The latter can also help to determine whether the organization indeed attracts the targeted audience, as identified in the recruitment plan. Finally, an agreement can be reached with the organization on, for example, co-organizing a targeted information session, securing an information booth on a larger event, placing advertisement in the organization's center, on getting a time slot at an existing meeting to explain about foster care, etc.

For a step-by-step guide on approaching association to work together, please refer to the next chapter 2.5 "recruitment through key figures".

## 2.5. RECRUITMENT THROUGH KEY FIGURES

### PROFILE AND ROLE OF KEY FIGURES

Key figures are people who have a special and privileged relationship with the target group you want to recruit. They have a leading role or have a lot of influence within the target group. They can promote the objectives of the organization and help to stimulate feelings of care and responsibility in the target group. Key figures assist with finding good foster families can also be cultural advisers or mediators. In the Netherlands, the foster agency Nidos successfully works with aged-out UMC as key figures and even as foster care providers.

Key figures can be described as being able to:

- Bridge the gap between foster care agencies and foster families with a migration background. This is because they are closer to the community and have a common language and cultural habits which is crucial for building trust
- Bring diaspora communities and government services closer together to lessen the distrust between the government system and the services.
- Help in estimating whether or not families would qualify for foster care agencies. It is therefore suggested to train, advise and provide follow-up to key figures and rely on them for word-of-mouth advertising because they know what is going on within the communities and families.
- Be seen as experienced experts and role models who can provide great added value in promoting foster care agencies.

There is an important role to play for diaspora communities who in general show willingness to take care of UMC. The shared identity, moral purpose and feeling part of the society are some of the reasons for them

to get involved. Furthermore, key figures from the diaspora can overcome the mistrust of parenting within different cultures and bridge the gap between diaspora communities on the one side and policymakers and established institutions on the other. Despite the willingness and the added value, information on foster care rarely reaches these communities.

Indeed, members of consulted diaspora associations[38] attach great importance to participation and recognition of their expertise which can contribute to the reception of UMC. Migration and the reception of UMC are themes close to their hearts:

- They consider themselves experts by experience because, like the UMC, they (or their (grand)parents) once arrived in their host country and experienced for themselves how difficult integration can be and what challenges this process entails in forming their own identity.
- Diaspora families and diaspora associations want to take responsibility for the reception of UMC and are asking for support from the government. This involvement contributes to a sense of belonging to society and can only be achieved through an inclusive policy.
- This is also linked to a moral and spiritual purpose to receive young people from their own community.
- According to respondents, expectations of taking care of siblings together should be reconsidered.
- Sticking to the placement of siblings has, according to some, sometimes led to negative experiences in the past. Some people indeed feel the pressure to take in siblings, while in fact they only have the capacity or preference to foster one child. This can lead to overcrowding and also the drop-out of the family, as they indicate they cannot (longer) handle the care of siblings.
- Some consulted diaspora members regret not being involved in the integration journey of UMC. They report that information do not reach them or is not adapted to their community:
  o Some diaspora associations are asking for specific recruitment material for their community. For example, a short informative video about foster care can be prepared where both financial aspects and the availability of an Afghan foster care counselor are mentioned.
  o Information sessions and flyers should be provided in own language. Afghan young people or foster families can, for example, talk in their own language during information sessions or other events/activities.
  o Varying channels of communication may help to reach diaspora communities (i.e. diaspora radio channels, newspapers, social media, etc.)

Furthermore, it is important that the organization invests time in getting to know key figures who are reliable and committed to UMC and the target group. These individuals can play a key role in advising and supporting recruiters in finding potential foster families or in searching for families themselves. Moreover, they will be able to give advice on flyers and publications (i.e; language, accessible information) and the content of the recruitment campaign.

## PRINCIPLES OF WORKING WITH KEY FIGURES

To succeed in recruiting key figures, it is best to start from four basic principles: recognition, relationship-based, concrete and goal-oriented, and reciprocity.

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[38] 2022 IOM's Analysis Report: consultations on foster care

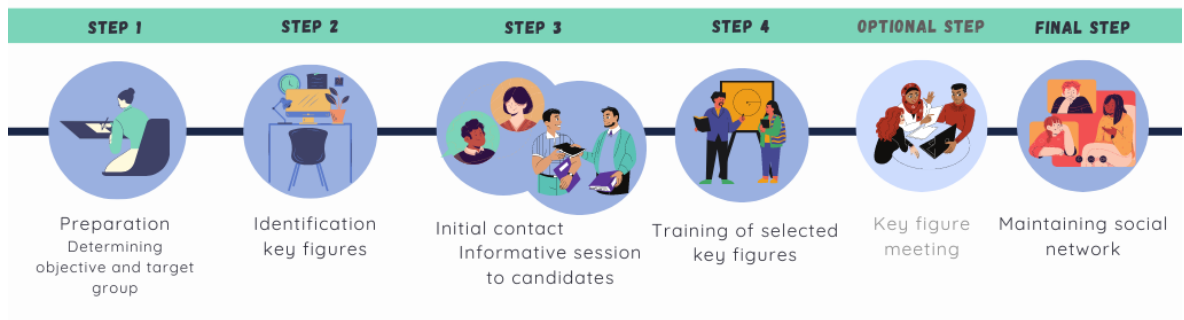SOP – Recruiting foster care providers in migrant communities

- Recognition: the efforts of key figures are not taken for granted. Key figures are those with fame and prestige in their target communities. This often means they have busy schedules. Keep in mind that they make their network available to your organization and that they occupy a vulnerable position: they act as guarantors and stick their necks out for your organization within their communities. It is therefore important to recognize the commitment of key figures, but also the expertise key figures, and diaspora associations have about their own community. However, not every association represents a whole community. It often represents only a part of that community. So, try to involve as many different associations and individuals from the same community as possible to get the broadest possible picture about that community.
- Relationship-oriented: In communities, trusting relationships are important. Investment in personal, direct, and informal contacts is therefore needed: be present, be visible, be trustworthy.
- Concrete and purposeful: Stand for a direct, human, and clear approach. Complicated procedures and administrative barriers should be avoided as much as possible. This makes it easier for them to get the message across to their target audience. Try to provide them with concise, clear information regarding your request for help and the guidance and follow-up you can offer.
- Reciprocity: Start from the "give and take" principle. Key figures are often socially engaged people with their own projects within their community. Assume that they also want to get added value from a collaboration. This is not something negative. It is important, however, to gain insight into their motivation and to properly frame what you can offer. Where possible, try to support their agenda and projects.

Working with key figures indeed gives access to potential candidate that are more difficult to reach through the regular recruitment channels. Nevertheless, working with key figures requires substantial investments in time and resources and additional reflections with regards to:

- Unbalanced cooperation: key figures are asked to invest time in the project, make their network available and perform a bridge function. At the same time, the care organization often cannot return what key figures needs, such as funding, access to subsidies, material support, etc. It can help to highlight the advantages, the community responsibility and added value of working towards the goal of recruiting foster care families;
- Different approach: key figures mostly demand a direct and personal approach, with concrete objectives and results. This is sometimes difficult to reconcile with the procedures, careful approach and the long-term nature of the care offer;
- Position of key figures: key figures occupy a vulnerable position by assisting your organization. Their community is often skeptical and suspicious of official entities. How can you ensure that key figures are not held accountable when families they have brought are dissatisfied or have a negative experience with your care organization?

## STEPS OF BUILDING A KEY FIGURE NETWORK

Working with key figures is based on the pillars of custom, cultural sensitivity, flexibility and sustainability and therefore requires a specific approach and a plan of action, for which the different steps will be elaborated in the following subchapters.

| STEP 1 | STEP 2 | STEP 3 | STEP 4 | OPTIONAL STEP | FINAL STEP |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Preparation<br>Determining objective and target group | Identification key figures | Initial contact<br>Informative session to candidates | Training of selected key figures | Key figure meeting | Maintaining social network |

### a. Preparation

*Objective*

A first important step is to determine what you want to achieve with the key figure approach, and to formulate the overall objective, e.g. *'have a selection of foster families with a similar culture for UMC.'*.

*Determining the communities*

After the overall objective has been formulated, it has to be defined in a more targeted, smart and specific way, so that expectations can be realistically achieved within the planned timing and with the resources available. It can, for example, be decided to focus the recruitment activities on a particular community taking into account the specific background of the current group of UMC, *e.g. 'focus the recruitment activities on the Arab-Islamic community as a large group of UMC originate from (Arab) Islamic countries'.*

*Determining the target group*

Finally, it is also important to specify which target group within the selected migration communities you want to reach. When there is, for example, a large group of Afghan boys, you can focus specifically on recruiting within the Afghan community.

### b. Identifying suitable key figures

Similar to recruitment through association, not every important, influential individual can be considered suitable for the objective of recruiting foster care providers with a migration background. Here are four considerations that can help in determining whether the person is a suitable key figure for your target group and objectives:

- Similar commitment: ideally someone who is a care worker himself
- Large network and good reputation
- Repetition: when multiple people refer to the same person, you can assume that this could be an important person.
- Having time: executives, association's founding or board members are often targeted. However, their time is often limited. A key figure can also be a volunteer or someone without an official position.

> **Tip!**
>
> ✓ Try creating a profile of each key figure or association with whom you start a collaboration. Map info such as function, political/religious movement, sub-migration group, core mission and vision, subsidy or financial support, etc.

SOP – Recruiting foster care providers in migrant communities

Once there is an overview of the different associations and potential key figures, you can start making contact and building a network.

For the first calls, it is often more efficient to have the most direct contact as possible (through phone or face-to-face). Furthermore, a proactive, outreaching and determinate attitude is important: deskwork alone will not give you the expected results, so go out on the street and try calling or reaching out multiple times and in different ways. Especially in this first phase, it is important to continue to actively approach key figures. When someone is not the right person to engage as a key figure, see where the added value of that person lays: maybe they can guide you in their network to other potential key figures or they can take up another role (mentor for UMC, help to optimize recruitment flyers, etc.).

When successfully having reached out to key figures, the first conversation is important to ensure their commitment to the organization's mission. Here are three considerations that can help in the first conversation with the key figure:

- Provide information: give a clear and concise explanation about what the care organization can offer, what foster care entails and what the needs are. Concrete, recognizable examples are important. Nevertheless, do not overwhelm with too much information at once. Key figures need time to get to know and trust you and your organization.
- Listen: show interest in what the key figures do. This will allow you to get insight into their engagements, motivation, activities, target group, etc. Moreover, this way you will better identify common points.
- Define expectations: be clear about what is expected of a key figure. A key figure should not become an expert or (unpaid) employee of your organization. He/she/they mainly has/have a facilitating role. At the same time, be honest about (the limits of) what your organization can offer.

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**Tip!**

✓ Keep in mind that key figures have other commitments, which can lead to appointments being postponed or delayed presence. It is important to be flexible, calculate extra time in your agenda and to be prepared for last-minute changes or invitations. These delays or postponements should not be taken as a sign of disinterest or disrespect.

✓ Request various means of communication to avoid losing contact when key figures change telephone numbers/e-mail address.

---

You can also organise a general info session for different potential key figures. Explain in this session what foster care entails, what your organization does and offers for foster families, which foster families your organization is looking for, what are UMC, what the role is of a key figure and what are the different forms of foster care (long-term, short stay, only in the weekends, etc.). It is recommended to foresee an evaluation

form for the participants to be filled out after the info session. This can also be a good moment to ask for feedback on your organization's recruitment strategy (flyers, videos, etc.) that you will have explained during the info session. Ask in the evaluation form whether the participant can be contacted for further collaboration as a key figure or in another role (i.e. strategic role, mentor for foster families), so foresee space where contact details can be left. These will then be invited to attend a training for key figures.

After the introductory phase, it is important to build a good relation with key figures, as this will form the basis for further cooperation. Keep in mind that 'laying this foundation' takes a lot of time. Exactly how much time depends on each key figure and can easily vary from three months to more than a year. During this time it is important to have regular telephone or face-to-face contact. The frequency of these contacts is also different per key figure (monthly, quarterly, ...).

### d. Selection of key figures

During the identification of key figures, the team of "network explorers" (staff members who are tasked to recruit key figures and identify potential foster families in migrant networks) can use the following criteria to filter out the key figures with the highest potential. Note that maintaining the relations with key figures will require a lot of (time) investment, so it is important to make a selection of key figures and to define with your organization minimum "terms of reference" for key figures.

#### *Knowledge of purpose*

The key figure is expected to get himself informed into foster care and gain knowledge based on an information session and training to recruit foster families – with or without a migration background- in order to take care of UMC.

#### *Same commitment*

This means that the key figure takes an active and involved attitude during the key figure meetings. A declaration of commitment is signed at the start of the collaboration. This is an agreement between your organization and the key figures.

Discuss with your organization the minimum commitments that will be required from key figures. Key figures can, for example, be expected to commit to:

- o Being present at minimum 3 meetings per year, organized in the region of the key figure
- o Organizing or participating in one event per year
- o Promoting foster care on social media or other channels with the given recruitment material.

#### *Broad network and reputation*

The key figure is expected to create, maintain and engage a broad network aside from their presence at the key figure meeting. In addition, the key figure has a neat and positive reputation in the community he or she is in. One may not possess a criminal record or be in a criminal environment. As the organization works with vulnerable groups (UMC), it is important to have a good screening.

*Sustainability*

The key figure engages in a collaboration with your care organization and engages to attend the meetings for key figures repeatedly and for a long period.

*Time*

The key figure is expected to create time and space to search for, attend or organize events, activities, to promote the purpose of the meetings.

> **Tip!**
>
> ✓ Persons who do not qualify to become a key figure can still support your organization in another way: maybe they can be included in a more strategic role by giving their feedback on the recruitment approach, they can be a mentor for foster families, they can guide you to interesting events or can help developing and spreading recruitment flyers/video.

*Language*

The key figure should be able to converse in the language of the care organization and, ideally, of the target community. Other languages that can be an added value in the community where the recruitment takes place are an advantage and should be motivated.

*Age*

The key figure must be 18 years or older, which is the age to recruit or foster in Pleegzorg Vlaanderen.

These seven requirements used by Pleegzorg Vlaanderen are only recommendations and can serve as an inspiration for your care organization. We advise that every organization use or come up with their own requirements.

e. Training

Training moments should be organized for the key figures in your (foster) care organization. These can take place on a local level (province or municipality). The key figure is put in contact with a "network explorer" employed by your (foster) care organizations. As explained earlier, a "network explorer" is a person who follows up with the key figure network.

To prepare the key person for his or her role as ambassador of foster care, a training is given after an initial informative session or consultation with the key person. The training will cover the following topics:

A. What is foster care and what different forms of foster care are there (long-term, short-term, weekends, monthly, etc.) (abridged version of info sessions for candidate foster care providers for UMC's)

B. How to do targeted recruiting.
   a. What is the selection process, what are the conditions to become a foster carer?
   b. What is the status of a UMC within foster care?
   c. What is the role of a guardian?
   d. Practical: how to deal with cultural differences and expectations from foster care
      i. Self-learning to make assessment: is this a family suited for foster care?
      ii. What are the requirements for a foster family?
      iii. Language policy: one of the partners must be able to speak the language of the care organization for screening (file foster care). In case of a kinship carer, it can be the language of the care organization or language of the child.
      iv. What to do when being confronted with ethical difficult situations: discussion and roleplay.

C. Explanation of the commitment statement and signature.

> *Example of a commitment statement:*
>
> I, (name key figure), hereby declare that I am making an engagement with (name care organization, location of organization) to:
>
> 1. Attend the training "from ambassador to key person within foster care"
> 2. Adhere to the seven conditions to be a key person
> 3. ... (other condition that the organization wants to add)
>
> Signature key figure + signature network explorer

D. Evaluation form
   See Annex 1 for an example evaluation form.

### f. Key figure meeting

An additional step could be to bring the recruited key figures together in a common meeting and to create a "team of important key figures". Organizing key figure meetings gives an extra sense of working together towards a common goal; it helps to inspire each other with new ideas and to reinforce efforts in recruitment. The key figures meeting can also be a space to share experiences, bring other potential key figures, give feedback on the key figures network and to update on upcoming activities and events.

Once a good relationship with a number of key figures (minimum 5) has been built, these kind of key figure meetings can start to be organized.

#### *What?*

Key figures meetings are meetings between the key figures and employees (i.e. network explorers) of the care organization. This is an opportunity to think together about how to achieve the shared goals of recruiting foster care providers. Furthermore, participants are encouraged to exchange experience and good practices.

*Objectives?*

A key figure meeting is more than just bringing different actors together in one space. The objectives of organizing a key figure meeting are threefold:

- Network function: key figure meetings are moments when the key figures get to know both the care organization and each other better. It is therefore important to foresee enough time for introductions. On the one hand, this ensures a closer key figure network, on the other hand, it creates a platform for key figures to increase visibility on their own organization or activities.

- Information function: it is very important that the key figures have a good knowledge of what your organization offers: your work domain, your mission vision, what you (cannot) offer as an organization, etc. Key figures themselves need clear information, as not all key figures are familiar with special youth care. Concrete and recognizable examples can help in clarifying matters: you can work with example cases, as well as with testimonies from people who have already come into contact with your organization. It can also be interesting, if possible and in line with child protection measures, to plan a meeting between key figures and UMC. The reasoning behind this is that it can strengthen the drive and motivation of key figures to make their involvement in the activities a success. Seeing the concrete change and impact of their work will be extra rewarding.

- Action function: joint actions are established and elaborated during key figure meetings. It is important not to guide the key figures too much in setting up actions; in general, it is more interesting when key figures come up with proposals themselves. As a care organization, you can identify how their proposals can be supported. Additionally, key figures who have already implemented a successful activity should be put in the spotlight, by inviting them to speak about their experiences. If relevant and available, you can point out the direct results that these actions yielded. This is very motivating and can inspire other key figures. However, there should also be attention to unsuccessful actions, as identifying what does not work can be equally informative for key figures.

*How?*

Key figure meetings should be organized on a regular basis. It is recommended to hold the meetings at the care organization if possible. This will allow key figures to become familiar with the location and operational side of the organization. Furthermore, think about ways to maintain contact and notify key figures of the next meetings, e.g. via breakfast moments, common WhatsApp group, personal calls or invitations. Make sure to invite the key figures personally to the next meeting. Lastly, make sure the network meetings are a safe space. For the first meeting, the network of key figures can brainstorm about a number of ground rules to create a safe space (i.e. respect, thanking each other for feedback, etc.).

> **Tip!**
>
> ✔ Be careful when placing key figures together and keep distance from conflicts amongst them. Key figures often function in similar domains, and depend on limited government resources or donations from the community. This can create competition and requires vigilance.

## g. Maintaining a social network

Once a network of key figures has been developed, this network must be maintained actively. Key figures often engage in the beginning out of enthusiasm, but due to busy schedules, conflicting agendas and other engagements there is a considerable risk that key figure meetings and established goals disappear into the background. That is why a determinate and outreaching approach is important in order to keep their engagement alive.

You can ensure ongoing engagement of your key figures, by:

- Getting in touch regularly: a good follow-up is essential. It can help to keep a list, where per key figure it is noted when the last contact was and what was agreed. Refer to this list on a regular basis. Do not be shy about contacting a key figure, even if nothing is planned. That is how you stay on their radar.
- Keep visiting the activities of your key figures, even when they have found their way to your organization. Going to their activities is a way to show interest, create a (trusting) relationship and stay informed of what they are doing. If there is no personal contact for too long, the risks of the collaboration diluting is high.

> **Tip!**
>
> ✓ Be careful to not engage with too many key figures. It is better to have fewer key figures, with whom a frequent contact and a good relationship is built than to have many key figures, with whom contact remains superficial and eventually breaks off. Keeping the key figure circle small is not always obvious. Key figures are enthusiastic and offer new organizations or people, resulting in a growing key figure pool. Nevertheless, it is important to set boundaries and communicate clearly about your possibilities (depending on time, resources and self-care).

## RISKS AND CHALLENGES

Different reasons can explain why a key figure recruitment is not successful.
- People do not show up or have no time to attend an information session.
- There is little reach in the community.
- It takes long to do the outreach to key figures and to find a suitable time for an information session.
- The existing organizations and key figures are overly demanded.

Another point of discussion is the involvement of the key figure in the selection procedure of foster families. Not every candidate foster family gets a positive reply at the end of the screening and selection procedure. As explained earlier, this can put the key figure in a difficult, vulnerable position in relation to his/her/their

community. Which information do you relay to the key figures after the screenings, what do you explain, what are the expectations of the candidate family towards the key figure? These are all questions you will be confronted with as a care organization. First of all, remember that professionals always remain bound by professional secrecy and that key figures are not colleagues and are therefore not covered by shared professional secrecy. Furthermore, screening and selection procedures can include quite some sensitive information and there may be a direct link between the candidate family and key figure. It is recommended to discuss this sensitivity in advance with the key figure and openly talk about "what if" scenarios. This will require trust from both sides. If one party cannot provide additional explanation due to privacy reasons, the other party will have to accept it. This underlines the importance of the training sessions and regular follow-up meetings with key figures, so the key figures know very well how foster care and your organization work and therefore can easier deal with these types of difficult situations. Finally, building trust, openness and transparency are of vital importance to overcome issues, so regular meetings can help to get to know each other well, to discuss expectations and indicate boundaries.

In addition to recruiting and informing key figures, the organization needs to maintain and further develop the social networks with the key figures. Therefore, it is recommended to have a team of direct points of contact for the key figures. These so-called "network explorers" will be the direct link in daily matters for the key figures and have a bridge function between the key figures, the community, and the different services of your care organization. They will maintain the network and communication between the key figures and the (foster) care organization and will be mandated to give info sessions and formations to the key figures, ensuring the latter have the right information to pass on to their community.

## 2.6.  RECRUITMENT THROUGH VISUAL ADVERTISEMENT

Advertisements allow to reach a wider audience with a limited involvement of staff during the outreach phase. They also offer continuous exposure and there are various publication types (TV, social media, flyer, etc.) that will fit the organization's budget and targets. However, as advertisements cannot be adapted easily (TV commercial, bulk of posters and flyers, etc.) additional efforts and time should be put in the development phase of the advertisement, in order to avoid reaching the wrong audience.

When considering visual marketing, care organizations have to think through carefully their strategy, message and visual identity and should avoid placing or reinforcing unnecessary barriers. As mentioned before, key figures and intercultural mediators can assist in making sure that the advertisement will convey the right message and is suited for the targeted audience. When recruiting through advertisements, it is important:
- ✓  To determine which type of publications are most appropriate for the target group(s);
- ✓  To identify through which reliable channels you will spread your advertisement. When recruiting within migrant communities, it could be preferable to recruit through local radio stations, local supermarkets, places of worship, etc.;
- ✓  To provide adequate information on the persons/profiles/etc. you hope will react to the advertisement (and who should not react);
- ✓  To consider using success stories and testimonies of existing foster carers;
- ✓  To prevent receiving unusable responses, which will require additional follow-up;
- ✓  To clearly specify how interested people can reach out: by phone, email, website, etc.

- To use warm colors and use pictures of a family together (including diverse families), rather than just the child alone, so potential foster care providers recognize themselves in the advertisement;
- To consider translating advertisements in the most common languages;
- To use accessible language that is not technical nor social work jargon (i.e. placement);
- To consider providing specific information about the child (age, country of origin) and their needs, as this can make fostering a UMC more concrete.
- To ensure representation and diversity in your advertisement, not only in terms of ethnicity, but also in gender and age. There is a significant bias towards female representation in visual publications. Females are often the primary caregiver, however, there are several fostering households where the male is the main caregiver; and indeed, there are many examples of single male foster carers. Not depicting men in foster care recruitment visuals could result in many thinking that it is not a role for them or that they are not required to participate in a fostering family. This may be even more of a barrier for practicing Muslim families where a male is often the 'head' of the family.

> ### Children in visual advertisement
>
> - Require explicit informed consent of parents or legal guardian, as well as the child.
> - Inform on the nature and purpose of the shooting (i.e. use in visual advertisement).
> - Inform child and parents/legal guardian that consent can be withdrawn at any point.
> - Avoid stereotypes or use the images outside of their original context.
> - Store pictures according to data protection principles.
> - Anonymity of the children in the visual is preferred (i.e. blur eyes).
> - Reconsider the necessity of using a child in your advertisement.
> - Do no harm and do not put the child at risk.

Three common publication types will be discussed shortly below. Each type has its advantages and disadvantages and these should be assessed carefully when making them part of the recruitment plan. These publication types can also be used in parallel and may need to be complemented with other recruitment methods, such as information sessions or peer-to-peer advice. As discussed earlier, diaspora members can contribute to the development of recruitment material. If possible, your organization should pay for the services of diaspora members to create and disseminate recruitment materials. People who are part of the migrant community can help you in better understanding the needs, preferences and channels of recruitment, leading to successful recruitment campaigns.

### a. Flyers

Flyers can be effective when the distribution points are carefully chosen.
- Select places where the target audience is located.
- Flyers should be attractive and colorful and display the information in such a way that the reader wants to know more about the organization and unaccompanied migrant children.
- Publish them in the languages of the different communities you are targeting.
- Refresh the flyers regularly, choose a different layout or new colors to keep them attractive.

✓ Make sure that they contain adequate and up-to-date contact details (e-mail address, website or telephone number) so that the interested parties can respond in the appropriate way.



*Example of a recruitment flyer designed for and by African diaspora in Brussels, under the U-CARE project (available also in French and Dutch)*

## b. Social media

For social media recruitment, it is important to define the target group very accurately. Once a post is shared, it can reach a large group of people, even across borders and continents. This can lead to unwanted reactions that can be a waste of time. To prevent this, it is valuable to start a social media campaign with people you know well. You could ask them to share the message only with people or groups they know and are within predetermined boundaries. This limits the reach of the campaign.

✓ Provide adequate information and make sure to mention what responses you do or do not expect.
✓ Refer to the organization's website and ask people to take a good look before signing up.

## c. Informative video for specific community or target group

Through consultations with key figures from specific diaspora groups, the suggestion came to develop information videos about foster care in various languages. This way the information reaches diverse groups and individuals through different various ways, such as social media, by phone, through organisations/associations, etc. The information videos can also be used to raise awareness on foster care among unaccompanied minors.

The advice below can support your organization in making an information video:

o Make the video in the language of the target group.
o Time the length of the video to a maximum of 15 minutes. Write a text about foster care. What do they need to know? What is nice to know? What can make the families decide to foster? What are the conditions? What is the difference between adoption and fostering?
o Make the video divers enough: show different kinds of foster families and situations of fostering (part-time, full-time, short stay, occasional, weekends)

o   Let the community participate in the making of the video: someone from the community can provide the explanations in the video.

o   Use inviting images and messages to attract the attention of who is watching and ensure diversity, correct reflection of the society and speak to other channels such as radio.

## 1.7   RECRUITMENT FOR A SPECIFIC "MATCH"

The methods mentioned above are suited to create a pool of foster care providers with a migration background, without focusing on the needs of one specific child. Nevertheless, in some cases, it will be necessary to find a "match" for a child with specific needs. Even though many of the recruitment methods can be used for finding a specific "match", the best option is to go through the child's network and key figures in the intended community. If a foster family is needed for a child with specific needs, recruitment will be done in a targeted way relying on all available information.

Specific needs may vary. This can mean that a foster family is sought in a particular city due to practical circumstances, such as studies. Or the recruitment targets a foster family that can provide extra care or with available medical care in the vicinity. In these cases, families will be recruited based on these specific needs of the child and the skills or practical matters that foster families can offer, such as nursing or a home suitable for a child with a physical disability. Recruiting through the child's network and social environment proves to be the most successful in these cares.

# SECTION 3

# DEVELOPING A RECRUITMENT PLAN

# SECTION 3 - DEVELOPING A RECRUITMENT PLAN

Before diving into the recruitment of new foster families within migrant communities, it is essential to have a clear idea of who you will be targeting, based on the needs of the UMC, as well as to determine which of the abovementioned method(s) will help to reach that objective. For this purpose, developing a recruitment plan is highly recommended, as it will help to formulate clear goals, strategies and concrete activities. Furthermore, it will help to guide your efforts, proactively react to obstacles and efficiently use available resources.

A recruitment plan is a living document where goals and strategies are determined. A recruitment plan is an important guiding document that needs to be reviewed and adapted on a regular basis in order to reflect the dynamic situation in which care organizations work, whether it is linked to the changing needs of UMC, new developments in the recruiting environment, or internal shifts.

Below we specify a number of key questions to be answered that will allow to identify information and elements essential for the development of a recruitment plan.

| Recruitment plan |
|---|
| **How many places are being sought?** |
| • Determine the number of places or families needed. <br> • Formulate SMART goals[39] *(Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Timely).* |
| **Which families are needed/not needed and for whom are we recruiting?** |
| • Define needs based on the screening of the UMC group (age, gender, language, ethnicity, religion, family context, explicit needs with relation to health/education/own preferences). <br> • Recruitment activities should target families who can answer to the needs of UMC. <br> • Define general and specific characteristics that foster families should have. <br> • Make sure you look into applicants who are not only interested but also have the capacity or are suitable to foster: age, location of residence (not too far from UMC's school/health facilities, community members), dogmatically religious, or if there are contraindications, such as indoor smoking, alcohol or drugs. |
| **How, when and where will the families be recruited?** |
| This is the core of the recruitment plan and needs thorough reflection and continuous evaluation. <br> • Determine recruitment strategy and method(s) (see section 2). <br> • Recruitment locations and timeline: specify per recruitment method where and when will be recruited (key figures, cultural groups, schools, churches, mosques, community centers, etc.). |
| **Who is responsible for which tasks?** |
| • Determine for each recruitment activity which staff member(s) will be responsible and specify the time investment. |
| **Which (additional) resources are needed?** |
| • Time investment foreseen. <br> • Staff allocation; need to attract new staff. |

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[39] Watch this Youtube video for more info.

| |
|---|
| • Budgetary needs. |

| |
|---|
| How and when will the progress of the objectives and activities be monitored and evaluated? |

| |
|---|
| • Determine frequency of monitoring and evaluation.<br>• Questions to be answered during monitoring and evaluation:<br>    o Does the plan need to be adjusted if the efforts do not meet expectations?<br>    o Do the goals need to be changed?<br>    o Do the "recruitment sites" or activities need to be changed?<br>    o What can I learn for future recruitment activities? |

| |
|---|
| What can be an obstacle or barrier in recruiting within a chosen community and with the chosen method(s)? |

| |
|---|
| • Consider the weaknesses of your recruitment method(s).<br>• Identify risks, obstacles and barriers of recruiting in identified communities and locations.<br>• Define mitigating measures to overcome risks/obstacles/barriers. |

# ANNEX 1: EVALUATION FORM KEY FIGURES

? **How satisfied are you with the overall content of the training?**

? **How satisfied are you with the trainer(s) and their presentation of the training?**

? **How relevant did you find the training?**

? **Are you now more informed about the role of a key figure after the training?**

? **How likely are you to join our organization as a key figure?** *(in case of first informative session)*

? **Are there points for improvement in the training?**

....................................................................................................................................................................

....................................................................................................................................................................

? **Do you have any further training needs after this?**

....................................................................................................................................................................

....................................................................................................................................................................

*We thank you for your time !*

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