

ALFACA II

Improving reception and care for unaccompanied children by structurally increasing the quality and quantity of family based care



COUNTRY REPORT ITALY

State of the art on family based care
for unaccompanied children

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Language review: Mandy Savage

This country report has been published as part of the ALFACA II project (February 2018-July 2019). Its aim is establishing sustainable family based care in Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Greece and Italy.

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Co-funded by the
REC Programme of
the European Union



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Since 2016, the political situation and legal framework in Italy have changed and this has affected the situation of unaccompanied children. The migrant flows have also changed, with a significant decrease in the number of arrivals (both adults and children).

The introduction of Law 47/2017 enabled the promotion of a new and integrated approach to unaccompanied children in protection and care. It established foster care as the best reception solution for unaccompanied children and provided for the creation of a list of volunteer guardians at the Juvenile Court. The law changes the child protection and care paradigm: from the traditional concept of parenthood to an expression of solidarity and active citizenship.

In Italy, unaccompanied children can be hosted in reception facilities or in a family. Foster care must be "considered for everyone" and should be organised where it is the best solution for the child, given their specific profile and the educational path that has been defined for them. Generally, foster care is arranged during the second phase of reception, after a period in a reception facility. The initial period can provide the necessary information regarding the sustainability of a foster care solution for the child.

Although encouraged by the law, foster care is still only used occasionally, for many reasons: the lack of available families, the problems of social and economic sustainability and, above all, the absence of nationally recognised quality standards for foster care, that would result in clear, harmonised and effective procedures and guidelines.

Heterogeneity of practices and fragmentation of procedures are two elements that characterise the Italian child protection system, which varies within the country due to many factors. This includes: the level of coordination between agencies and institutions, the involvement of the non-profit sector as a service provider, local government policies, the characteristics of child migration, and the economic and human resources allocated.

In some areas, there are good practices which should be shared in order to improve foster care services and quality standards. Exchanging local best practices should be encouraged by regional and national government.

Non-profit organisations in Italy have an important role in the child protection system and, consequently, in promoting foster care for unaccompanied children. These organisations should be supported in selecting, training and giving guidance to reception families. This aim could be achieved by enhancing cooperation and collaboration with public sectors to design a strategy to face the challenge of sustainability.

DEVELOPMENTS SINCE ALFACA

The ALFACA¹ training took place in Venice in March 2017. Almost 18 social workers and representatives from seven municipalities participated. The ALFACA II project activities that have been carried out by organisations from Belgium, Croatia, Cyprus, Italy and Greece, coordinated by Nidos from the Netherlands, will help to strengthen the strategic partnership between Ai.Bi., other non-profit organisations and public entities.

Guardianship and foster care for unaccompanied children are key aspects of the child protection and care system. A single, holistic approach has been developing in Italy, thanks to awareness-raising activities by non-profit and civil society organisations, in collaboration with the National Authority for Children and Adolescents and with regional ombudsmen.

In 2017, the National Authority for Children and Adolescents, in collaboration with non-profit organisations and agencies such as EASO, trained volunteer guardians in all regions. During the training, there was a special session dedicated to alternative foster care.

Many municipalities in Italy have developed interesting and effective projects to promote foster care for unaccompanied children, and many good practices have emerged. ALFACA represented the first opportunity to share and disseminate those experiences. Unfortunately, although progress has been made in the legal framework, and there are now some excellent examples of successful foster care, this kind of care is still only used occasionally and the system is facing the same challenges as in the past.

¹ Within the ALFACA-project, Nidos (the Netherlands) in cooperation with Minor-Ndako (Belgium), Jugendhilfe Süd-Niedersachsen (Germany), OPU (Czech Republic), the Danish Red Cross and KIJA (Austria) developed training for professionals working with reception families that take care of unaccompanied children. The goal of the project was to further develop and improve the reception of unaccompanied children in families by providing professionals with the tools needed for this and teaching them how to use these tools. The project implementation period was 1 October 2015 to 1 April 2017 and the project was co-funded by the European Commission.

1. STATE OF THE ART ON FAMILY BASED CARE IN ITALY

1.1 Current national context

Since the general context was described in the 2016 ALFACA report, changes have occurred in the legal framework, the political situation and the migration phenomenon in Italy. The number of arrivals has significantly declined and the number of unaccompanied children has decreased as well: from 26,000 unaccompanied children arriving on boats in 2016 to 3,330 disembarkations recorded during the first nine months of 2018².

By 30 June 2018, 13,151 unaccompanied children had been registered in Italy, a decrease of 26.4% compared to the same period of 2017, and an increase of 7.4% compared to 2016. According to 2018 statistics, the unaccompanied children are mostly male (92.6%) and most of them are housed in reception facilities, with only 3% in foster care. 59% of the unaccompanied children are 17 years old, 25% are 16 years old, 9% are 15 years old and only 7% are under the age of 15. Age is a critical factor, because it greatly affects the choice of reception, and the path to independence and adulthood.

On 7 April 2017, the Italian parliament passed Law No. 47 to amend existing legislation on the 'Provision of protective measures for unaccompanied children in Italy' [*Disposizioni in materia di misure di protezione dei childreni stranieri non accompagnati*]. The Zampa law, as it is known, regulates all aspects related to the protection of foreign unaccompanied children. It is the first time in Italy, but also in the European Union (EU), that a legislative measure of a general nature has been adopted for the protection of unaccompanied children. With this new law, a series of integral interventions have been planned to support the children present on Italian territory, recognising them as vulnerable citizens with rights. In particular, there will be greater equality between unaccompanied foreign children and Italian children. However, the Italian political context has now changed completely and has become a critical factor. The current coalition government, composed of the far-right Lega and radical Five Star parties, is introducing a tough policy on immigrants. If the Zampa law can be considered a best practice at an international level, and an important step forward for the national child care system, then Legislative Decree 840/2018, known as the security and immigration decree or the Salvini decree, represents a step backwards for the protection and integration of migrant children.

² ISMU Foundation.

Figures	
Number of unaccompanied children (2018)	13,151 (at 30 June 2018) Ministry of Labour and Social Policies
Reception in families	Still only used occasionally; scattered
Centralised/decentralised reception system for unaccompanied children	Mixed; reception is the responsibility of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, but unaccompanied children are the responsibility of the Ministry of Labour and Social Policies. The municipality is responsible for the care and protection of separated children (including unaccompanied children) present on its territory

1.2 SWOT analysis

Internal	
Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reception in foster care is preferred and encouraged by the law • Many different types of foster care are available to meet the different needs of each child and these have been successfully tested • The presence of a high number of professionals with different backgrounds and competences (social workers, psychologists, pedagogues, lawyers, etc.), guarantees complete and effective protection of a vulnerable child 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of quality standards: although national standards have reached consensus on the right of all unaccompanied children to grow up in a family environment, they remain vague on the quality standards of foster care, which sometimes undermines the effectiveness of the political and legal reforms • Foster care is still only occasionally used and is highly fragmented; the quality of the services provided are variable at a regional level • Insufficient economic and human resources make it difficult to ensure the appropriate support and guidance that families and children need during the fostering process

External	
Opportunities	Threats
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The good practices introduced by various municipalities (such as Venice and Macerata) can be used more widely to find durable solutions and define common guidelines, and to satisfy the need for standardised and integrated procedures • The decreasing number of arrivals helps the country to overcome the emergency situation and to implement durable and more effective solutions for reception and care • The law encourages family reception and promotes an innovative approach that identifies foster care as an expression of solidarity and active citizenship 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The current political situation: Italian government is taking a tough line on immigration, which negatively affects the protection of unaccompanied children • Cultural and institutional resistance to change (i.e. path dependence) • Prejudice and lack of knowledge about the unaccompanied children phenomenon, and about the foster care system, reduces the number of families and individuals available to provide foster
Recommendations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the exchange of good practices between regions, recognising the role of municipalities as the main agents of change • Strengthen the role of non-profit organisations in training and supporting foster families (as provided for in the law) • Enhance cooperation between private and public sectors to design a strategy to face the challenge of sustainability • Invest more resources (both human and economic) in the protection and care system; this implies the strengthening of professionals' skills and expertise • Provide more training and support for reception families • Ensure child participation during the whole process • Increase community awareness in order to prepare society for the inclusion of unaccompanied children 	

1.3 Good practices in Italy

In Italy, the legal framework encourages foster care: Law 149/2001, explicitly titled "*The child's right to a family*", affirms the child's right "*to live, grow, be educated within a family*". According to the law, a decision about foster care is taken by social services and can be consensual or judicial, according to the opinion expressed by the child's parents; it should be mandatory for children under the age of six.

The law gives national, regional and local government the authority to organise: "*training and refresher courses for social professionals, initiatives to increase public awareness of foster care, and adoption and training courses for families and people who wish to become foster or adoptive parents, as well as initiatives in support of the activities of family-like communities*". This can be done directly or through agreements with non-profit organisations operating in the field of child and family care. Civil society therefore has a fundamental role in the child protection system, as a service provider and a point of reference for public entities. The law applies to all children living within the Italian territory, whether they are Italian or foreign, as "*the right to live, grow and be educated in a family is guaranteed without distinction of sex, ethnic origin, age, language, religion and with respect for the child's cultural identity*".

Law 47/2017 promotes greater equality between unaccompanied foreign children and Italian children, providing for foster care as the best reception solution for unaccompanied children (article 7). Implementation of article 7 and 11 (on volunteer guardianship) changes the child protection and care paradigm: from the traditional concept of parenthood to an expression of solidarity and active citizenship. Foster care and guardianship could, in the same sense, be considered an expression of active citizenship. A systematic and unique approach could be developed that responds to both these services. Foster care must be "considered for everyone" and should be organised where it is the best solution for the child, given their specific profile and the educational path that has been defined for them.

There are many different types of foster care available, depending on the needs and background of the child (age, personal story and level of integration) and of the reception family (characteristics, expectations, and role in connection with the other actors involved).

There are also different kinds of reception families available: a kinship family, a family from the same cultural background or a different one; they are all good practices. Foster care may also be full-time or part-time. The municipality of Macerata mostly recruits reception families from the same culture, because more of them are available and the child's integration in this family context is easier. The municipalities of Venice and Trieste, however, have organised successful fostering with relatives (in particular for children from Balkan countries). And the municipality of Alessandria works with Italian families, in an effort to promote greater social integration.

The Italian reception system consists of two phases: first line reception centres, where essential facilities are guaranteed, and second line reception, where the child is transferred to a reception family, taking into consideration any specific needs identified in the first interview. This system makes it easier to choose the best reception solution. So foster care is a second step, after a period in a community that can provide the necessary information for sustainable foster care. Well-structured initial reception is therefore essential for collecting key information and for defining an Individualised Educational Plan (IEP). This is an essential tool for defining the child's integration path. The better the reception process starts with in-depth knowledge of the child, and the more structured the IEP is, the greater the chance of success of the fostering itself.

The Italian child protection and care system is complex, involving many actors. These professionals with different backgrounds and competences (social workers, psychologists, pedagogues, lawyers, etc.), guarantee complete and effective protection of a vulnerable child.

The existence of a National Authority for Children and Adolescents, and regional ombudsmen, as impartial institutions that are mandated to safeguard the best interests of the child and monitor implementation of the law, is an important strength of the system in Italy.

1.4 Possible difficulties

Although family based care should be the preferred type of reception, and is also in line with the law, it is still only used occasionally: 4% of unaccompanied children in Italy today are in family foster care.

The reasons for this are complex and mainly related to the lack of quality standards recognised at a national level. Although national standards have reached consensus on the right of unaccompanied children to grow up in a family environment, they remain vague on the quality standards of foster care. This sometimes undermines the effectiveness of the political and legal reforms. In the absence of clear, harmonised regulation and procedures, the municipalities' approach to managing foster care is non homogeneous and often emergency-oriented. The main consequence of this is highly fragmented foster care, in terms of both quality and development.

Some municipalities (such as Venice and Macerata) are implementing effective and innovative projects to develop the foster care system, while others (Rome and Trieste) are still far behind in applying the law (for both guardianship and foster care). Law 47/2017 tried to satisfy the need for standardised and integrated procedures in order to overcome differences between and within regions. But a year after the law was passed, these differences persisted, and in many territories the law has still not been implemented. Public institutions also show a strong resistance to change and often considerable inertia (the path dependence theory), i.e. that they adapt very slowly to a new regulatory and political context and to a changing social environment.

The high number of actors involved, combined with the complexity of the child care system, becomes a weakness if the tasks are not clear and the roles of different organisations overlap. This will usually depend on the level of development of the foster care/guardianship system. For example, where the guardianship system has not been fully developed, the volunteer guardian's mandate is not clear and their role is easily confused with that of the social worker.

In many cases, foster care is not possible due to a lack of available families. Recruitment is a key variable. A well-functioning foster care centre in the area, as is the case for Venice, and structured networks (families, professionals, institutions), as is the case with Macerata and Alessandria, enhance recruitment, training and support during the process. But in most cases it is prejudice, and a lack of knowledge of unaccompanied children and the foster care institution, that reduce the number of families/individuals who may be interested in exploring the idea of foster care, and could be available for fostering.

Sustainability is a challenge for the system. Strategies need to be drawn up to enable the continuity of interventions both socially and economically. Social sustainability concerns the well-being of the reception family and the child, and raises issues about the tools and social workers available for support. Strengthening social service competences could be a helpful strategy, but more resources would be needed. The development of a system of supporting services (such as a coach for the family) may require more resources, human and economic.

The main problem is the availability of economic resources, because most of them are allocated to reception facilities. Even if subsidy would be granted to the reception family, in part covered by the state, the investment per child would be higher. The foster care itself may be less expensive, but the costs of recruitment, training and support are not always considered as part of it and covered by funding.

Moreover, the Italian political context has changed completely. The current coalition government is introducing a restrictive policy on migration. Legislative Decree 840/2018, known as the security and

immigration decree or the Salvini decree, reflects this policy. One of the biggest changes and challenges that has come out of this decree is the removal of humanitarian protection. Although this does not provide for rules that explicitly restrict the rights of unaccompanied children, some aspects will inevitably affect them adversely in the transition to adulthood. In fact, the decree states that all migrants who do not fall within the definition of refugee, subsidiary protection or limited cases of special protection, risk denial of their application for international protection. This also happens in cases of vulnerable individuals. Unaccompanied children who are close to the age of 18, regardless of their integration path, risk losing the protection granted to them as minors.

1.5 Practices to be developed

Heterogeneity of practices is an element that characterises the Italian child protection system. As already mentioned, the fragmentation and quality of foster care (and of the care for unaccompanied children in general) differs from one region to another. This is due to many factors, including the local characteristics of child migration. In order to deal with very different situations and emergencies (massive arrivals by sea or longer-term reception), municipalities have developed original and effective types of reception and care.

Macerata, for example, promotes '*Famiglie a colori*', a foster care project for unaccompanied children which provides economic and psychosocial support for reception families and a path to independence for the children. The municipality of Venice decided to invest in foster care several years ago, and around 50% of the unaccompanied children there now live in families. The municipality has a team specialised in recruiting, training and supporting reception families. These and other best practices should be disseminated and shared, through expert meetings or training events, in order to find durable solutions and define common guidelines, and to satisfy the need for standardised and integrated procedures. The decreasing number of arrivals helps the country to overcome the emergency situation and to design, share and implement durable and more adequate solutions with an integrated approach.

Finally, reception in foster care is encouraged by law. Law 47/2017 provides for a series of integral interventions to support unaccompanied children, including the development of foster care and the guardianship system. Moreover, the law supports an innovative approach: child protection and care is no longer the traditional concept of parenthood, but an expression of solidarity and active citizenship.

1.6 Child participation in the situational analysis

Unaccompanied children have been involved indirectly in the SWOT analysis through a survey conducted among their guardians. The survey findings show that most of the unaccompanied children are between the ages of 15 and 17. Despite their age, these children are happy to be in foster care and be part of a family network.

Many of the guardians had already been working in the foster care system before they started working with these children. Major difficulties they have experienced relate to communication between the child and the family. This is because, at the beginning of the fostering, most unaccompanied children could only speak some very basic Italian or none at all. Many of the guardians gave positive feedback on the foster care itself, with the unaccompanied child integrating quickly into the family. Some of them claimed that, when the foster care started, it was not easy for the child to adapt to the new environment. Nor was it easy for the family to approach the child the right way. The guardians did say that they have always received support during the different phases.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

The first thing to be done in order to improve alternative family care is to invest in foster care at all levels (national, regional and municipal). The problems are, on the one hand, the lack of resources, and on the other, their allocation. At a national level, more resources should be devoted to the protection of unaccompanied children in general, specifically to foster care. Law 47/2017 is undoubtedly a positive development, but what it lacks is the provision of additional resources to better achieve the protection of foreign unaccompanied children. Unfortunately, the current Italian government has totally different priorities, and is going to decrease the resources allocated to the migrant reception system in general.

At a municipal level, most of the available economic resources are still allocated to reception facilities. Foster care may be less expensive, but the costs of recruitment, training and support are not always considered as part of it and covered by funding. In collaboration with non-profit entities, municipalities should first reflect on this aspect and estimate the cost of funding the resources actually needed. But this is a political choice, and the current political context is hostile.

As to human resources, the professionals at public social services need training that will build on their skills and expertise (e.g. intercultural or legal skills), in order to adapt their psychosocial and educational interventions to unaccompanied children's special needs. Non-profit organisations operating in the field of child and family care should also upgrade staff skills, if necessary.

Cooperation between public entities and civil society should be enhanced to make projects more effective; in particular, public entities could delegate some phases of the fostering process (i.e. training, recruitment or support) to non-profit organisations, according to the principle of subsidiarity. Moreover, public and private sectors should create an advanced partnership by developing pilot projects to find a more suitable solution to the lack of sustainability or resources.

Experimenting with new practices should be encouraged at national and regional level, for example, through grants for projects aimed at improving alternative family care for unaccompanied children.

Regional and national public authorities, as well as the National Authority for Children and Adolescents, should hold special events to promote the exchange of good practices between and within regions.

Looking closer at the foster care path, the importance of adequate training and support for reception families should be emphasised. Municipalities and organisations should work together to provide training courses focused on the specific characteristics of unaccompanied children (e.g. age, traumatic experiences, relationship with biological family, etc.), on the aims of this type of foster care, and on their relationship with the child.

In addition to the provision of specialised support from professionals, more help should be developed to give guidance to reception families: peer support or mutual support could be very useful and specific models should be disseminated and shared.

The municipality has a fundamental role in promoting social inclusion for unaccompanied children: raising awareness through national and local campaigns to prepare society for reception would be helpful.

According to Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have a right to be heard. Unaccompanied children can no longer be perceived as passive recipients of care and protection, or accidental beneficiaries of policy decisions. Attention must be paid to their feelings, thoughts and views. All the actors involved should define shared strategies to ensure child participation in all stages of the process.

Finally, the government should ascertain whether Law 47/2017 is being fully implemented, to ensure the protection of unaccompanied children and to guarantee their rights are respected throughout their stay in Italy, as well as to promote their social inclusion.

3. ACTION PLAN

AIM	Fight prejudice against migrants and promote the children's right to protection and care
ACTION	Conduct an awareness-raising campaign targeting citizens, in particular young people. The campaign should focus on the stories of children, families, professionals, etc., to portray the actual situation of unaccompanied children in Italy
ACTIVITIES	Define the target group, design the campaign, engage the main partners (in particular, media partners), find sponsors, create a schedule of initiatives and events, make promotional materials, promote the campaign online through social media
ACTORS	Media partners, sponsors, stakeholders (public entities, other organisations, reception families and unaccompanied children)
TIMEFRAME	2019-2020

AIM	Improve the effectiveness and sustainability of protection and foster care for unaccompanied children by strengthening public-private partnerships
ACTION	Design and implement projects in which public entities work in cooperation with non-profit organisations to recruit, select and train reception families
ACTIVITIES	Conclude and implement an agreement between municipality and civil society organisations to coordinate recruitment (starting with the extension of the recruitment area from local to national, inspired by Terreferme projects ³), selection and training
ACTORS	Public entities and non-profit organisations
TIMEFRAME	2019-2021

AIM	Improve professional skills to better meet the needs of unaccompanied children and reception families
ACTION	Promote training events for professionals (targeting social workers, pedagogues, social work assistants, psychologists, and other professionals working in the child care system)
ACTIVITIES	Design and provide training courses at a national level; the training should be developed by experts from civil society, universities and public entities, and the events should also be an opportunity to exchange good practices
ACTORS	Experts from various organisations (public and private sector plus universities)
TIMEFRAME	2019

³ <http://www.cnca.it/attivita/progetti/progetti-in-corso/mms-e-affido>

AIM	Promote at an institutional level the children's right to protection and care and to growing up in a family environment
ACTION	Lobby and advocacy
ACTIVITIES	Lobby and advocacy
ACTORS	Ai.Bi.
TIMEFRAME	Action will be continuous

AIM	Ensure economic sustainability
ACTION	Investigate grant opportunities and experiment with different resources allocation through pilot projects co-funded by the EU) or a foundation
ACTIVITIES	Grant search, submission of project proposal, implementation of pilot projects. To approach public entities, staff with specific skills in grant writing and project management could be useful to achieve the aim of this action. Non-profit organisations should be the main partner, as they can offer skills in project cycle management
ACTORS	Ai.Bi.
TIMEFRAME	To be determined

4. DISSEMINATION PLAN

The outcomes of the project represent an opportunity to share and disseminate experiences. Closer collaboration between private and public entities such as non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and municipalities will enable the dissemination of good practices to all important stakeholders in Italy. The aim of this dissemination strategy is to maximise the impact, visibility and credibility of the project. Specific strategic objectives are to:

- Share information about the project and its findings via both traditional media (e.g. newsletters, publications, news media coverage) and digital media (e.g. social media such as LinkedIn and Facebook)
- Share and compare foster care practices, including online promotion of the results and the country report, in order to improve the standards of quality in the country and guarantee complete and effective protection of the vulnerable child
- Transfer knowledge on foster care in general and foster care for unaccompanied children (e.g. by creating training materials and educational resources, and organising workshops)
- Support the development of a strategy to improve the system at both a regional and a national level

The information which will be disseminated includes: all public project deliverables, results from training and events, any other type of publication relevant to the project, good practices already adopted in Italy, and recommendations to improve the system.

The target audience consists of social workers, directors and experts from:

- Public authorities responsible for child protection at a local level (municipal, regional, ombudsmen, etc.) and a national level (ministries, National Authority for Children and Adolescents, etc.)
- Civil society organisations, such as NGOs and other organisations that provide services in the immigration and child protection field
- These categories are not exclusive

The public deliverables and results of the project will be disseminated via the following channels:

- Conferences, workshops and training courses at a local and national level (at least two events, a workshop and a conference, for the next two years) and a specific event to present the country report (in 2019)
- Media, to share project results: digital media platforms (e.g. Facebook, blogs, social networks, etc.), Ai.Bi. newsletters, journals, Ai.Bi. website page about the project (2019-2020). Dissemination through these channels will help to increase public awareness and will last beyond the project's end
- Partner networks: dissemination via networks can lead to future collaboration as well as a greater uptake of the project outputs, in particular after the end of the project

The success of the dissemination plan depends on the political and social contexts, as these affect the perceived relevance of and interest in these themes.

APPENDIX

Alfaca training in Italy

A two-days ALFACA training was held in Italy in April 2019. The training contributed to the dissemination of the ALFACA material, and the implementation of outcomes of the expert meeting held in September 2018. Representatives from different Italian municipalities attended the training. The participants shared their experiences and were taught new practices regarding family based care, with the goal to further develop family based care in the Italian care system. As already mentioned above, the situation in Italy is fragmented and the practices vary. The training was helpful to compare the different practices and to find commonalities and solutions, in line with the ALFACA material.

The main topics were :

- **Background information on unaccompanied children:** development of unaccompanied children, psychological well-being, safety risks, basic needs of unaccompanied children after the flight, risk and protective factors for unaccompanied children, promoting resilience of unaccompanied children.
- **Working in an intercultural environment:** culturally sensitive communication, cultural context of the unaccompanied child, specific topics related to cultural differences in the situation of an unaccompanied child, specific topics related to cultural differences related to the risk of child abuse.
- **The need for guidance (how to support the children and the reception families):** strengthening protective factors for unaccompanied children, guidance regarding family reunification, self-reliance at 18, guidance on the outcome of the asylum procedure: return or integration.
- **Recruiting families:** how to recruit, which families to recruit: important characteristics of reception families (ethnic or indigenous reception families).
- **Screening families:** who and when to screen, how to screen.

Some of the representatives of the municipalities, for example Macerata, already have an excellent foster care system. It has an excellent structured network with committed families, social workers and institutions while many others local entities had the opportunity, during the training, to learn about new tools and practices to be used in their local situation.

What emerged from the training is a strong willingness to create common guidelines at national level, in order to reach the best reception system for foster care. The ALFACA material can be an excellent instrument to further improve family based care for unaccompanied children.