

# IN PLAIN SIGHT

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## Unaccompanied and Separated Girls



# QUIZ ?



# Definition



**Unaccompanied children** are 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.

**Separated children** are separated from both parents, or from their previous primary or customary caregiver, but not necessarily other relatives.

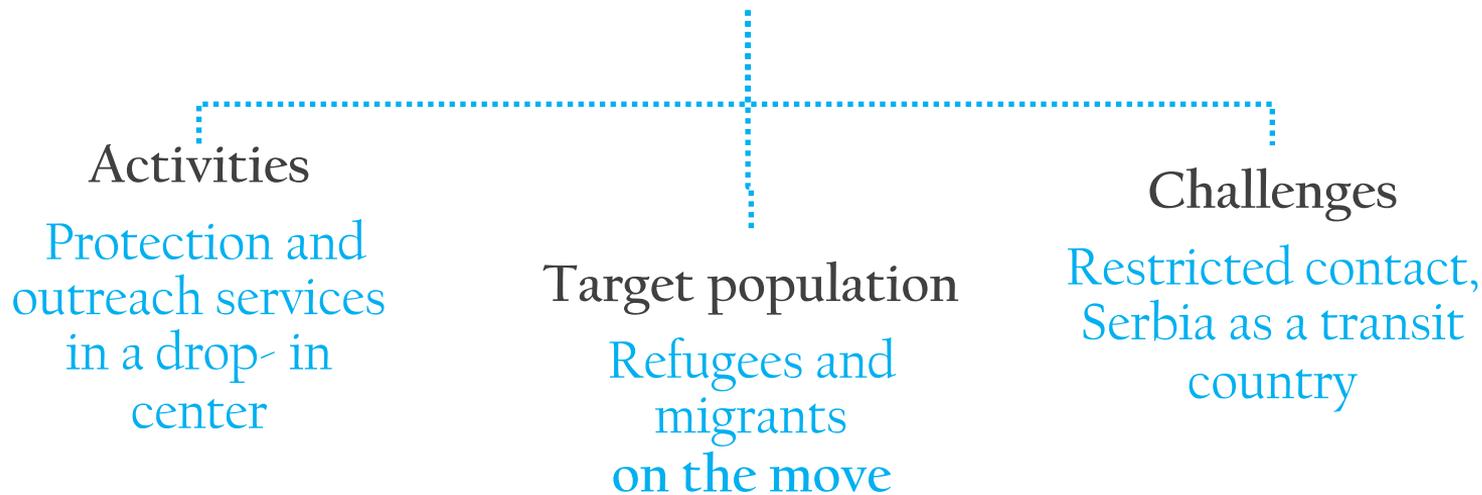
# Content

- What is the issue?
- What we have learnt from girls and partners?
- Understanding the key challenges and emerging good practices
- Key recommendations and tools for better programming



# Experience from the field

## Infopark



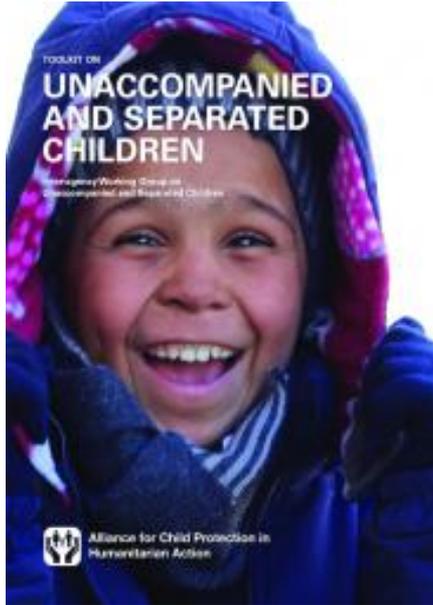
# Experience from the field

Info Park experience and practice in the field showed that:

- Group of unaccompanied girls appear in few numbers, are usually reluctant to look for assistance and disappear as quick as they have appeared
- Unaccompanied girls usually come from very few countries (Somalia, Eritrea) and usually all tell the same story as if it was rehearsed
- However, In their safe space and thanks to structured outreach some few cases of separated girls were also identified especially from Iraq and Afghanistan



# Spot the girl



Some  
30,000  
children

arrived in Greece, Italy,  
Bulgaria and Spain between  
January and December  
2018 - a 9% drop compared  
to 2017.



A total of  
12,700

children who arrived  
in Europe in 2018 were  
unaccompanied and  
separated.



Some  
14,600  
refugee children

were resettled in Europe  
in 2018, mostly to the  
United Kingdom, France  
and Sweden.



Out of the total number  
of children who sought  
international protection in  
Europe in 2018, almost 70%  
were registered in just three  
countries: Germany (78,280),  
France (24,135) and Greece  
(21,770)

Data

AVAILABLE  
TOOLS AND  
GUIDANCE

Practices

Perceptions

Are we seeing  
them?



Where are they going?



Where do they come from?



How do they  
arrive?



Do they want  
to be seeing?



Is the experience of girls and  
boys the same?



## Understanding the issue



Literature  
Review



3 FGD in Serbia,  
Bulgaria and Greece  
with 46 stakeholders



Interviewed or  
consulted over  
20 UAS Girls  
(or formally  
so)

# QUIZ ?



# What data tells us?

## BULGARIA

- In 2018, girls accounted for 3% of UASC with boys making up 97% (80% aged 15-17 years).

## GREECE

- In 2018, girls accounted for 6.2% (232) of total UASC with 93% of these aged 15-17 years

## ITALY

- In 2018 girls account for 7.2% of UASC registered

## SERBIA

- In 2018 only 1 UAGirl accommodated in dedicated accommodation

Share of female UAMs (x-axis) and share of UAMs younger than 14 years old (y-axis) in total UAM applicants

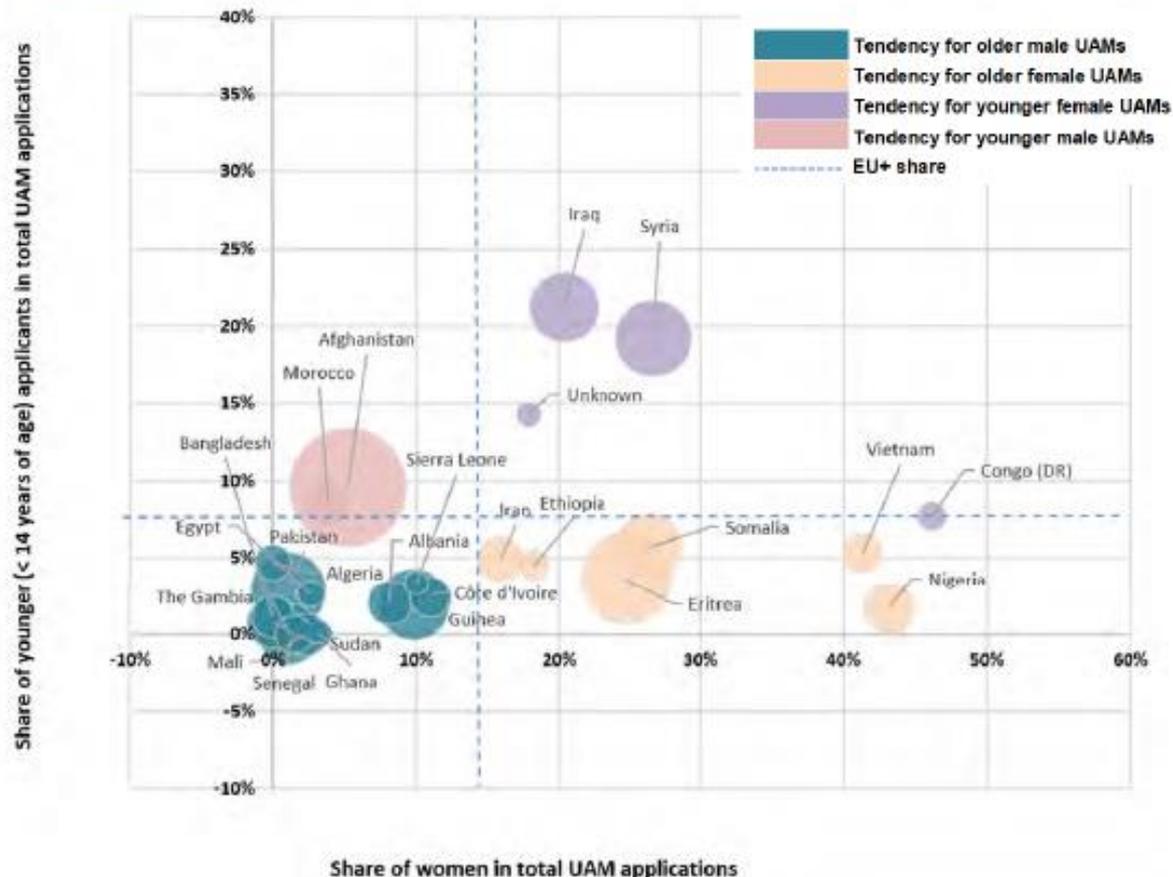


Figure 32: The proportion of UAM applicants younger than 14 years old was larger among females than males

# What data does not tell us?

**However**, these figures only represents those registered and is not indicative of all unaccompanied and separate girls on the move, travelling with others believed to be their family, self-identifying as over 18 years or avoiding detections.

# How do they Travel?

“

boys help the families, but girls need the families ”



# Challenges to identification

## Girls

unlikely or unwilling to self-identify or report if they are travelling with extended families or other adults

may identify as adults to avoid identification (particularly is trafficked or married)

incomplete or partial information

Girls may or are unsure of who to trust

# Challenges to identification

## At border points

Not prioritised  
for screening if  
not visibly  
unaccompanied

Not prioritising  
age as a key  
risk indicator

Difficulties  
determining  
family links  
and trafficking  
risks

# Challenges to identification

## When in Europe

Lack of spaces where girls can be supported and accommodated

Reluctance of social services/municipalities to accommodate girls due to doubts over age and identity

Time needed to build trusting relationship with girls to share experiences and to observe family dynamics is limited

Limited capacity to provide follow up care (e.g. SV survivors)

Lack of awareness and understanding on gender specific risks for unaccompanied or separated girl

# What girls told us

I didn't have the information about what will happen to them when they say they are alone and a minor

I stayed 3 months before identifying as unaccompanied



# Married girls – special considerations

Married girls should be considered ‘unaccompanied’ if they are travelling only with the adult spouse and not accompanied by her parents

- How do we identify what is best and safest for them?
- Which specific considerations do we need to take into account?
- Which are the current practices?

# Preliminary Conclusion

Girls are more 'invisible'  
than boys

Different strategies to  
travel than boys

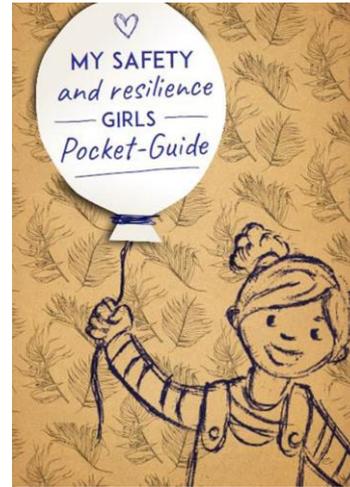
Often associated with a  
family or an adult as  
coping mechanism, this  
also increases their risks  
of exploitation, violence  
and trafficking.

Gaps in available data and  
research that focus on the  
numbers, patterns, risks  
and experiences of girls

Limited tools and  
guidance for practitioners

# Key Recommendations

Improving tools, training and resources for frontline workers, service providers and national authorities to build awareness and skills to identify girls.



Enhancing capacity to identify unaccompanied and separated girls and provide appropriate responses

# QUIZ ?



# 2 TOOLS

1. **9 signs that a girl may be unaccompanied or separated**  
*(for non-specialised actor);*
2. **Identification Tool: observation checklist + structured conversation questionnaire**  
*(for specialised actor);*



# Tip sheet

1. The girl is travelling alone.
2. The girl does not have valid travel or identity documents or has falsified documents
3. The girl is travelling with a group/family member that does not correspond to expected parent/child profiles
4. The girl is unable to speak fluently in the language or dialect of her companions or caregivers
5. The girl has different appearance or physical characteristics to that of her caregivers

# Tip sheet

6. The girl shows signs of pregnancy or has assumed a parental care giving responsibility for infants or young children
7. The girl looks intimidated around her travel companions and displays signs of emotional distress including trembling, shaking, or becoming flushed
8. The girl lacks personal care or hygiene
9. The girl gives a well-rehearsed story, or one which is very similar to stories given by other girls.

# Observation checklist/Indicators

## *SHE ASKS FOR HELP*

### General

- Does not have travel or identity documents or has falsified documents.
- Does not have shared language or unable to speak fluently in the language or dialect of her companions or caregivers
- Travelling with group/family members where age differences do not correspond to expected parents/child age profiles
- Travelling with group/family members where ethnicity does not correspond to expected parents/child profiles
- Assuming parental care giving responsibilities for infants and young children.
- Has friendships with adults and/or persons with a longer presence in the country.
- Travelling with an older man or 'uncle'
- Responses to questions are answered in brief and/or well-rehearsed
- Unable or reluctant to give details of accommodation or personal details

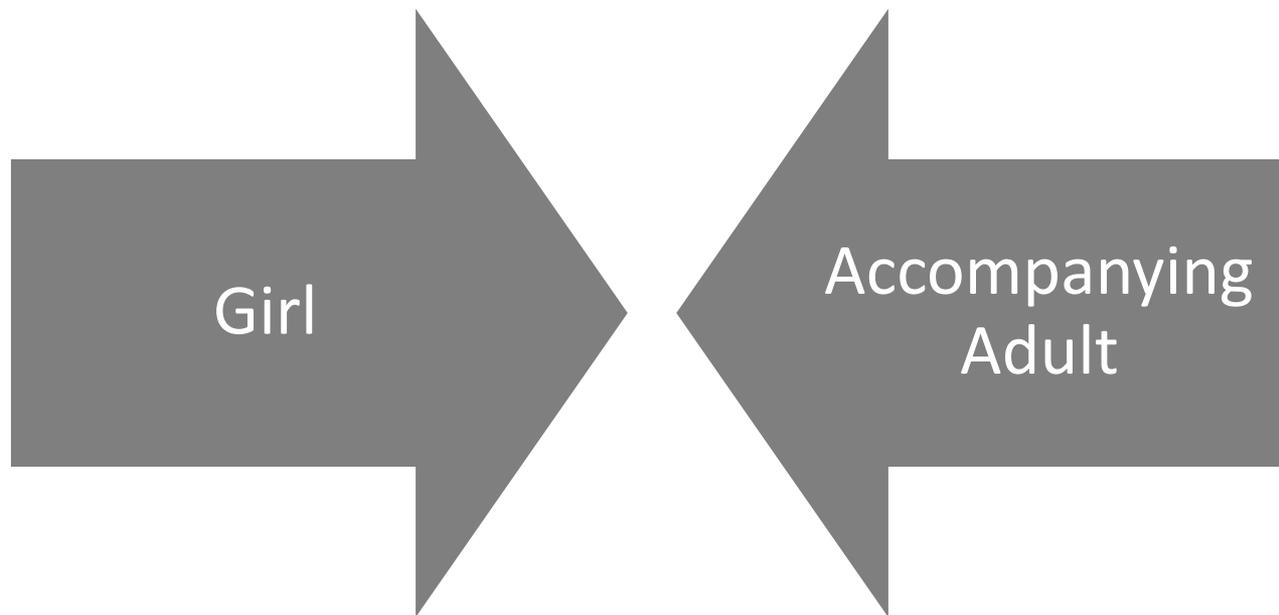
### Physical

- The girl shows signs of
  - physical bruising, cuts, burns, scars or injuries that may be signs of violence experienced before or during the journey.
  - pain or physical discomfort.
  - -neglect and/or little care for personal hygiene, hair and clothing.
  - fear (sweating, trouble answering direct questions, avoiding visual contact).  
intoxication or misuse of drugs
  - tiredness, hunger or fatigue.
- Visible signs of pregnancy.
- Different appearance or physical characteristics to that of her caregivers.

### Behavioural:

- Displays volatile behaviour e.g. refuses to engage in dialogue (not talking, keeping their distance, etc.)
- Interacts with others in a provocative/aggressive manner with outbursts of anger, even in protected environments such as reception facilities.
- Looks intimidated and/or behaves in ways that do not correspond with behaviour typical of age.
- Shows signs of emotional distress including restlessness, trembling, shaking, crying or becoming flushed.

# Double Questionnaire



# What Comes Next?

- Finalizing note
- Presenting the issue in different forums
- Testing tipsheet
- Advocating to integrate elements on second tool into existing ones

# THANK YOU



[mmaglietti@unicef.org](mailto:mmaglietti@unicef.org)  
[frivelli@unicef.org](mailto:frivelli@unicef.org)  
[gbv@infopark.online](http://gbv@infopark.online)



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