

Workshop proposal nr.27

Title: Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers – vulnerability and survival

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Unaccompanied minor asylum seekers – vulnerability and survival

This workshop will discuss subjects related to unaccompanied minors (UMA) seeking asylum in the Nordic countries. The numbers of UMA have increased substantially during the last year, and both the asylum system, child welfare and service systems in the municipalities are under pressure coping with the large numbers.

Unaccompanied minors are often described as both independent and vulnerable. They have lost parts of their childhood because of war, prosecution and flight. Many of them are in a risk group because of traumatic experiences - either in their countries of origin, during flight or in exile. These factors also constitute risk factors when it comes to potential for integration. At the same time children with a refugee background are survivors. This duality between vulnerability and survival constitutes an important area of discussion for politicians and NGOs, but also for academics.

Integration and inclusion are key concepts for the Nordic countries policy on ethnicity and diversity. Language training and focus on education has for a long time been important target areas. Our ambition with this workshop is to provide a holistic view on childhood and migration. Also papers that highlight all forms of combating discrimination and improving life chances and living conditions will be appreciated. These measures may include actions such as changed legislation, public practices as well as attitudes towards immigrants and ethnic minorities.