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**UNIVERSITÄT  
BERN**

**PHBern**  
Pädagogische Hochschule

## **INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP**

### **Navigating Shifting Social Terrains: Ethnographic Perspectives on Unaccompanied Refugee Youth in Europe**

International Workshop at the University of Bern & the University of Teacher Education (PH)  
Bern, Switzerland June 7 & 8, 2017

Every year, thousands of young people on the run from war and persecution, or escaping poverty and chronic instability, make their way to Europe without their parents. Embarking on long and often dangerous journeys, they have either become separated from their families on the way or set out on their own. In recent years, the number of unaccompanied minors arriving in Europe has risen drastically. While this has provoked much media and policy preoccupation, not much is known about unaccompanied refugee youth's social worlds. In this workshop we aim to bridge this gap by bringing together ethnographic research focusing on young unaccompanied asylum seekers' own perspectives, experiences and interactions. Following the routes and pathways the young people take into and across the European Union, we will bring scholars conducting research in some of the most important arrival- and transit points in conversation with each other. The individual presentations will show how young unaccompanied refugees actively deal with the expectations, rules and norms that come with being labelled a "child refugee". By comparing the lived experiences of refugee youth in various countries and settings, we intend to establish how they actively deal with different degrees of control and uncertainty, and agency and ambition. Each presentation will focus on a specific aspect that sheds light on the young people's everyday lives (such as the role of religion, family links, education, friendships, interactions with social workers and institutions). At the same time, they also show the specifics of the treatment of unaccompanied minors in different European and non-European countries and raise important theoretical questions regarding the conceptualisation of childhood, vulnerability and deservingness/un-deservingness in the context of displacement.

## Keynote Lecture

Wednesday, 7<sup>th</sup> of June, 18.00-19.45

by **Elaine Chase** (UCL, London International Development Centre) *Transitions, capabilities and wellbeing: How unaccompanied young people make sense of becoming 'adult' in the UK and Europe* [open to the public, no prior registration required]

Venue: PH Bern, Hochschulzentrum vonRoll  
Raum 104  
Fabrikstrasse 6

Directions: <https://www.phbern.ch/ueber-die-phbern/standorte/fabrikstrasse-6-hochschulzentrum-vonroll.html>

## Workshop Programme

Thursday, 8<sup>th</sup> of June, 9.00-17.30

### **Part I: Re-thinking Age and Childhood through the Prism of Unaccompanied Refugee Youth**

- 09.00-09.30: Welcome and introduction (Kathrin Oester, PH Bern)
- 09.30-10.00: Francesca Meloni (postdoctoral researcher, UCL) *I didn't choose this life: Unaccompanied young people's transitions into adulthood*
- 10.00-11.00: Discussion
- 11.00-11.30: Coffee Break

### **Part II: Institutional Responses to Unaccompanied Minors and Questions of Inclusion/Exclusion**

- 11.30-12.00: Ulrika Wernesjö (postdoctoral researcher, Linköping University) *In the vestibule: Unaccompanied refugee youth, positionings and conditional belonging*
- 12-12.30: Annika Lems (postdoctoral researcher, University of Bern) *The slippery slope between integration and exclusion in Swiss educational responses to unaccompanied refugee youth*
- 12.30-13.15: Discussion
- 13.15-14.30: Lunch Break

### Part III: Unaccompanied Refugee Youth at the Gates of the European Union

- 14.30-15.00: Laura Otto (PhD candidate, Universität Bremen) *“They tell us that we are minors, but they don’t make a difference between us and adults” – Negotiations of help and vulnerability in Malta*
- 15- 15.30: Sabine Strasser (University of Bern) & Eda Elif Tibet (PhD candidate, PH Bern & University of Bern) *Everyday borders: Hope, agency and constraints of unaccompanied young refugees in Turkey*
- 15.30-16.00: Coffee Break
- 16- 16.30: Milena Belloni (postdoctoral researcher, University of Antwerp) *Family project or individual choice? Exploring the roots of underage Eritreans’ migration*
- 16.30-17.30: Discussion

**Registration:** Participants for the workshop on the 8<sup>th</sup> of June are kindly asked to register by sending an email to [annika.lems@anthro.unibe.ch](mailto:annika.lems@anthro.unibe.ch) by the **5<sup>th</sup> of June**. Participation is free of charge, but seats are limited, so to secure your participation we recommend booking in early. Attendees are requested to provide for their own lunch – there are several reasonably priced options available around the workshop location. The keynote talk is open to the public, no registration is required.

Workshop Location: University of Bern, main building, Hochschulstrasse 4

Room 115 / 1<sup>st</sup> floor (West wing of the building)

Maps and directions can be found here:

[http://www.unibe.ch/university/campus\\_and\\_infrastructure/campus\\_maps\\_and\\_lecture\\_halls\\_and\\_classrooms/maps/1\\_main\\_building/index\\_eng.html](http://www.unibe.ch/university/campus_and_infrastructure/campus_maps_and_lecture_halls_and_classrooms/maps/1_main_building/index_eng.html)



SWISS NATIONAL SCIENCE FOUNDATION

This event is organised by the team of the SNSF funded research project “Transnational Biographies of Education: Young Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers and their Navigation through Shifting Social Realities in Switzerland and Turkey“