

Support and Monitoring After Return of Children



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Stockholm, 11.03.2015 – Judit Németh-Almásí



Terre des hommes

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Experience and learning from another RETURN project

Terre des hommes

Swiss NGO: child rights in development

Topics in Europe:

1. Children on the move
2. Child protection systems



Basics of the Project

Aim: provide practical guidance on post-return support and monitoring – when children – **both unaccompanied and children in families** - are returned

How?: Gathering evidence on factors influencing reintegration, by following, and providing assistance to 120 children in 6 South-East European countries (Albania, BiH, FYR of Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Serbia) over an 18-month period

Target group: under 18 at the time of return decision, children that were back for at least 1 year, not victims of trafficking, returned in family or as unaccompanied child – not benefitting from voluntary return assistance.

Detailed information and situation of children followed (and assisted)

	Albania	Bosnia-H.	FYROM	Kosovo	Montenegro	Serbia	Total
Children	20	20	20	20	20	20	120
Girls	11	8	8	12	10	8	57
Boys	9	12	12	8	10	12	63
Roma, Egyptian or Ashkali minorities	15	13	20	10	9	20	87
Born outside country of origin	5	8	0	6	2	1	20
Unaccompanied or separated	4	0	0	0	0	0	4

Destination Countries

Host countries	Albania	Bosnia-H.	FYROM	Kosovo	Montenegro	Serbia
Greece	171 ¹³¹					
Italy	1			1		
Germany	1	17	13	6	7	12
France	2			1		2
Switzerland		1		2	2	1
Sweden			2	5		4
Belgium		2		2	5	1
Luxemburg			3	1	4	
Slovenia			1			
Denmark			1			
Austria				1	1	
The Netherlands					1	
Norway				1		

Findings

- Children in families were regarded as part of family unit and no consideration was made for their individual rights and best interests
- Problems children (and families) would face upon return were not appropriately anticipated and addressed
- Durable solutions not thought through
- Lack of reintegration plans and child-friendly processes all through the return
- Little to no pre-return information given to countries of origin – especially not about the education, health situation of the child
- Appropriate referrals were often not made once families returned

Challenges Faced by Returned Children

- Lack of knowledge of majority language
- Barriers accessing school
- Lack of access to services (also due to no referral or lack of info)
- Administrative invisibility
- Vulnerability as factor even before the migration
- Culture shock (for children having lived extended periods abroad)
- Special group (Albania): children who used to be exploited as beggars
- Decision not in best interests of the child (challenging the finding of durable solution)

Post Return Support and Reintegration – Proposal and Guidance

For whom?

- Child protection professionals in countries of destination to prepare safe and dignified return.
- Child protection professionals in countries of origin to focus on reintegration needs of children
- Decision makers in countries of destination: helping to gather information from countries of origin in order to make decision in the best interests of the child and with a durable solution in mind.

Pre-Return Procedures

- Life Projects – these can work both while in country of destination, but also as the **basis of the reintegration plan** – and can provide seamless continuation in the domains of health, education, etc.

Focus on:

- Education
- Health
- Social Integration
- Legal Status
- Financial Support

Post-Return Monitoring (12-18 months)

- Milestones for implementation of support
 - Upon arrival
 - Within 3 months
 - Within 6 months
 - After 12 months
- Score Cards (and scoring system) based on the assessment of different domains
- Indicators for completion of monitoring

Recommendations

- Pre-departure communication between countries of origin and destination
- Appropriate BID and family assessments
- Countries of origin need resources and technical assistance to be able to provide appropriate reintegration services
- Monitoring to be done by independent agency/organisation
- Children in families should also be considered, consulted, their reintegration prepared
- Administrative invisibility should be addressed as priority
- Child-friendly return procedures

What next?

- The project went only to the extent of ,research and propose'
- Advocacy plans are being drawn up by Tdh
- France: consultations with front-line professionals
- Cooperation with similar projects (e.g. Netherlands)
- **Results in Countries of Origin**
 - involvement of Center for Social Work in family visits (Kosovo)
 - Introduction of language courses for returning children (Kosovo)

For more information:

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Child Protection Hub <http://childhub.org>

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Child Protection Hub for South East Europe. At the top, there is a navigation bar with 'English', 'JOIN THE COMMUNITY | LOGIN', and a search bar. Below this, three main sections are highlighted: 'LEARN and explore', 'CONNECT with colleagues', and 'EXCHANGE information'. The central banner features a photograph of two young girls blowing dandelions, with the text 'LAUNCHING CHILD PROTECTION HUB' and 'Join our child protection community in Europe'. A 'JOIN US' button is positioned below the text. At the bottom of the banner, it says 'Photo credit: Tdh | Francois Struzik'. Below the banner is a newsletter subscription section with the text 'SUBSCRIBE TO OUR NEWSLETTER', an email input field, and a 'SUBSCRIBE' button. To the right of the subscription section, there is a language selection dropdown menu set to 'Nyelv kiválasztása' and a 'Fordító' (Translator) button. At the very bottom, there are three circular icons representing 'LATEST NEWS', 'LATEST RESOURCES', and 'COMMUNITY'.

