Support and Monitoring After Return of Children


Stockholm, 11.03.2015 – Judit Németh-Almási
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)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Albania</th>
<th>Bosnia-H.</th>
<th>FYROM</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Montenegro</th>
<th>Serbia</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>120</td>
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<tr>
<td>Girls</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>57</td>
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<tr>
<td>Boys</td>
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<td>12</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
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<td>Roma, Egyptian or Ashkali</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
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<td>20</td>
<td>87</td>
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<tr>
<td>minorities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Born outside country of origin</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>20</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unaccompanied or separated</td>
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<td>0</td>
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## Destination Countries

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<th>Host countries</th>
<th>Albania</th>
<th>Bosnia-H.</th>
<th>FYROM</th>
<th>Kosovo</th>
<th>Montenegro</th>
<th>Serbia</th>
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<td>Norway</td>
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</table>
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 seemless 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