

# **Minor migrants in need of care and protection: How can we identify vulnerable children and how can we make the system meet their needs?**

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Landsforeningen for oppsøkende  
sosialt ungdomsarbeid

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Uteseksjonen  
(Outreach Services,  
Alcohol and Drug Addiction Service,  
City of Oslo)

[www.uteseksjonen.no](http://www.uteseksjonen.no)

# Internationalized streets

- *Asylum seekers*
  - adults and unaccompanied minors
  - with and without the anticipated need for protection
  - “Dubliners”
  - in and out of legal/illegal status
- *Undocumented migrants / “without papers”*
- *EU citizens*
  - migrant workers
  - Roma involved in begging, street sales, etc.
- *Potential victims of trafficking in all these groups*



**- This is how Oslo's drug scenes are controlled  
(VG 25.02.2009)**

“Different ethnic groups have shared the drug market in Oslo between them. Sellers are recruited directly from reception centers.”

# Minor drug dealers

- Minors (15-18 years)
- Without parents / other guardians
- From Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco
- Drifting in Europe, “street children”
- Asylum seekers / undocumented
- Organized crime (?)
- Victims of human trafficking (?)

# Minor drug dealers

- The boys are perceived as experienced and “fearless”
- Part of an organized sales force almost immediately after arrival
- Some use drugs themselves
- Protected or controlled by adult drug dealers

# Concerns related to their...

- Physical and mental health
- Affiliation with substance abuse and criminal activities
- Housing
- Care and adult supervision
- Vulnerability to exploitation



# The role of outreach social workers

- Mapping of street environments, groups and sub-cultures
- Establish contact with groups and individuals
- Mapping of the situation of the child
  - history and background
  - situation in Norway
  - identify possible victims of trafficking
- Follow-up work
  - provide information
  - motivation to accept help
  - refer to child protection and other agencies

# Challenges

- More challenging to achieve trust, mutual understanding and realistic expectations
- They are often reluctant to contact authorities and/or get help
- Seen as criminal / immigration cases
- Who is responsible for intervention?
- The system is not prepared or equipped

# What needs to be done? (part 1)

- Specialized Child Protection Team
  - all child protection cases involving separated children
  - with expertise in human trafficking and migration-related issues
- Cooperation between the child protection services, outreach services, police and immigration authorities

# What needs to be done? (part 2)

- Update the legal framework (child protection law) to make it easier to place potential victims of trafficking in adequate care
- Establish (more) specialized institutions for minor victims of trafficking
  - focus specifically on safety, rehabilitation, information to victims
  - coordination of the human trafficking case with the police, the child's lawyer, legal guardian, immigration authorities and other relevant parties

# Think outside the box!

- Not all young migrants fits inside the “asylum”-box or “human trafficking”-box – but some of them still need care and protection
- Vulnerable and/or exploited children:
  - a case for the child protection services first (to consider individual needs),
  - later maybe the asylum system, ordinary child protection assistance or specialized institutions for victims of trafficking

***Thank you for your attention!***