



## «Trafficking in my backyard?» - What do child protection professionals know about trafficking?

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Line Ruud Vollebæk



### The online questionnaire

- 98 child protection workers - 80 % were employed in municipal child protection, 17 % in governmental child protection (*Bufetat's* professional team), and 3 % were employed in other child protection agencies.
- 44 % in municipalities with 10-50 000 residents, the rest equally divided between big (over 50 000 residents) and small (under 10 000 residents) municipalities
- Child protection officers from all regions of Norway have taken part, the majority, however, from the most densely populated areas - Østlandet (49 %) and Vestlandet (31 %)
- Most of the respondents are experienced child protection workers: 73 % have been employed by the child protection service for 5 years or more (49 % for over 10 years)
- 35 % state that they have personal experience of cases in which it has been suspected that a child is a victim of trafficking in persons
- 60 % state that the child protection service they work for has handled cases where there have been worries about children being victims of trafficking in persons (from 1 to over 10 cases) in the course of the last two years



## The interviews

22 interviews with a total of 32 persons

- municipal and state child protection services
- outreach services
- reception centers for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers (UMA)
- interdisciplinary operative team
- legal guardian for UMA
- county social welfare board
- police
- immigration authorities
- state administration



## The child protection service's knowledge of trafficking in children

- The child protection service's knowledge of the trafficking in persons varies a lot.
- To a great extent this depends on dedicated individuals, close collaboration, and the extent/occurrence of identified cases of trafficking in persons in the municipality/region



**Redd Barna**

## The child protection service's knowledge of trafficking in children

- 65 % state that they have received no training or information about trafficking in persons while working in the child protection service (44 % with personal experience, 76 % in big municipalities)
- 81 % state that they have no knowledge of routines for identifying children who are victims of trafficking in persons (64 % for those who have received training in trafficking in children, 50 % for those who have personal experience of cases of child trafficking)
- 43 % of the respondents state that they have no knowledge of websites or guides where they may receive information about child protection work with children exploited in trafficking in persons
- 20 % state that that they do not know what agencies or persons they may turn to for advice and guidance in such cases



**Redd Barna**

## The child protection service's knowledge of trafficking in children

- Only 14 % state that in their own experience they have enough knowledge to handle a case of trafficking in persons if they were given the responsibility for such a case tomorrow.
- The proportion increased to 22 % among the respondents who had been trained in the field of trafficking in persons, and to 34 % among the respondents who had personal experience with cases of trafficking in persons.
- Experience with earlier cases of trafficking in persons is pointed out as the single most important precondition for feeling sufficiently competent in working with child trafficking cases in the child protection services



## *Child protection officers' understanding of responsibility towards children exploited in the trafficking in persons*

- Most of the participants in the survey felt that the child protection service should bear the main responsibility for children exploited in the trafficking in persons, but it was emphasized that this must not imply a refusal by other bodies to accept responsibility
- Some child protection officers are uncertain about their role concerning children who may be exposed to trafficking in persons – mainly because it is about asylum seekers and other foreign children whose residence in the country has an unclarified status



## *Routines for identification of possible victims*

- Only 11 % of the respondents stated that their child protection service/professional team has routines for identifying children who may have been exploited in trafficking in persons (24 % for those who have received training, 32 % for those who have personal experience with child trafficking cases)
- Among the respondents working in child protection services with more than five cases of trafficking in persons during the last two years, 43 % answered that they had routines for identification, and as many answered that they did not.
- The figures mirror the fact that only to a limited extent do child protection services, with the exception of the emergency units, make the first identification of possible victims of trafficking in persons themselves (police, reception centers, outreach services)



## *Routines for child protection work with possible victims*

- 19 % of the respondents stated that their work-place had routines for case work with possible victims of child trafficking (39 % for those who have received training, 47 % for those who have had personal experience with child trafficking cases)
- 71 % of the respondents from the child protection services with the greatest number of cases of trafficking in persons (more than five cases during the last two years) stated that they had routines for the following up of such cases.



## Challenges

- Clarification of the status, identity, and age of the child, and its relation to possible accompanying adults
- Lack of competence to identify/ uncover
- Lacking/varying knowledge and focus in other agencies, for instance the police
- Lack of experience
- Lacking or poorly visible routines
- Few appropriate initiatives with good quality and competence about the target group (especially for those who "doesn't want help")
- Insufficient resources and capacity
- Various challenges connected to the children's status as unaccompanied minor asylum seekers / with Dublin-status / with temporary legal residence / without legal residence etc.
- Cooperation and exchange of information between the child protection services and the immigration authorities



## *Child protection officers' proposals for initiatives*

- Increased resources (finances and persons)
- Increased consciousness, increased competence
- Trafficking in persons as a subject in various studies
- Routines and tools of identification
- More institutions adapted to different groups of children exploited in the trafficking in persons, with different needs
- Regional specialized units
- Good inter-departmental teams focusing on the child's total situation
- Transfer to the child protection service of the care for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers between 15 and 18 years of age.



## *Save the Children's recommendations: Resources and organising*

- A national centre of competence should be established to deal with cases involving children without connection with Norway/vulnerable migrant children, with particular competence in trafficking in persons and in issues related to migration
  - child protection cases in Oslo
  - develop and share knowledge and methods nationwide
  - international cooperation
- Regional teams of competence
- Grant systems / project funds should be established directed towards work with children exploited in trafficking in persons, and with prevention among vulnerable migrants



## Save the Children's recommendations: *Competence-increasing initiatives*

- The trafficking in persons must be included in the curriculum and the teaching in the basic training of child protection and social work as well as in relevant kinds of further education
- Courses in identification of possible victims of trafficking in persons are to be organized locally/regionally and offered free of charge to all child protection employees
- An internet resource about trafficking in persons should be developed, with thorough information about both the identification and the following up of children who may have been exploited in the trafficking of persons.
- Detailed routines and check-lists should be worked out for child protection work with children exploited in the trafficking in persons, adaptable to local conditions (local cooperating partners etc.).



## Save the Children's recommendations: *Prevention of child trafficking*

- The responsibility for the care of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers between 15 and 18 years of age should be transferred to the child protection service
- Dublin-returns of unaccompanied minor asylum seekers, particularly in cases where exploitation is suspected, should be stopped
- The arrangement giving temporary residence until the 18th birthday for unaccompanied minor asylum seekers should cease
- Information initiatives should be implemented towards vulnerable groups of migrant children and young people
- Increased attention to outreach social work among vulnerable migrant children and young people.