

Youth, migration and trafficking: Rights and challenges

Presented at
Trafficking in children – A criminal act calling for
a child protection response

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Child and youth migration

- Child migration
 - Children migrating with their biological parents, foster or social parents, or other carers
 - Unaccompanied minors
 - Asylum-seeking families or children/youth
 - Children of labour migrants or youth travelling for work
 - Visiting family in Europe and overstaying visas
- Vulnerability in migration
 - Travelling
 - Relationships (family, people met along the way, in the destination country)
 - Work

Children and migration

- The migration process: between choice and coincidence
- Children and youths' relation to their families before and after migrating
- Childhood and youth: rites-de-passages in their lives, "here and now" and plans for the future
- The experience that there is no going back when migration has taken place: problematic relations, having done or experienced things not understood or accepted by family, losing touch with family or disappointing them economically

Project objectives

- To understand the underlying causes and motives why unaccompanied minors migrate:
 - Why do they flee or leave their families and country of origin?
 - Why do they come to Norway?
 - Who (e.g. the youth, their family or the smuggler(s)) decides the destination?
 - Find out what factors are decisive for which country unaccompanied minors end up in.
 - Compare the situation with two other countries.

Empirical data

- Qualitative study based on interviews with unaccompanied minors and professionals working directly with them
- Interviews undertaken in three reception centres and with youth settled in 2 municipalities (January - April 2010)
- 30 interviews with unaccompanied minors between 15-18 years of age
 - 22 Afghans (all boys)
 - 4 Somalis (all girls)
 - 1 Iraqi (boy)
 - 3 Eritreans (2 girls and a boy)
- 14 interviews with professionals working in reception centres and employees at care centres
- Conversations with guardians and others who work with finding municipalities where youth can settle, and with integrate

Transit and destination Smuggling and trafficking

- The migration process: between choice and coincidence
- The experience that there is no going back when migration has taken place: problematic relations, having done or experienced things not understood or accepted by family, losing touch with family or disappointing them economically

Why do unaccompanied minors migrate?

- War and armed conflict in the region the youth originate from
- Family situation and threats or perceived danger in social/local networks.
- Very limited opportunities for education and work in the country of origin
- Migration to neighbouring countries that did not meet their needs or expectations
- Beyond mere survival, migration is also an active and concrete strategy to achieve the objectives and dreams in the lives of youth and their families.
- Migration is as much a way to get away from a difficult situation as it is about getting to Europe.
- It is not uncommon that unaccompanied minors who migrate to Europe have experiences with migrating to neighbouring countries.

Migration as a means for achieving social mobility and as a survival strategy

- Beyond a real need for protection, it is the search for a better life and the opportunities for a better life that makes Europe an attractive destination for unaccompanied minors.
- The meaning of migration in young people's lives: participation, agency, other people's power over their lives
- In this process, they are dependent on help to get from one place to another....
 -Helpers, smugglers and/or trafficking?

Youth in a vulnerable situation

- Are most unaccompanied minors victims of trafficking because of the way they ?
- Girls and boys: differences in the way they talk about their experiences and how their vulnerabilities are perceived.
- In reception centres and after: should steps be taken to protect them?

The pitfalls of travelling irregularly

- Do they want to travel or are they forced?
- Smuglers, helpers or businessmen?
- Routes and means of travel
- Flows of information: between youth and other migrants
- Not knowing...