

Child Trafficking in South-eastern Europe: The Development of Good Practices to Protect Albanian Children

Contribution by Terre des Hommes and National Pär Föräldrar
in sharing best practices in the fight against child trafficking.



Seeking to understand how children become victims of trafficking
To determine how we must intervene.



This publication was made possible through support and financial assistance provided by the U. S. Agency for International Development (Award 182-A-00-03-00103-00), the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Ref. 2003-000385), the United Nations Children's Fund, the Oak Foundation (Grant OCay-03-032), and the National Albanian-American Council. The opinions expressed herein are those of Terre des hommes and do not necessarily reflect the views of its partners.

Contents

Introduction	5
1. WHY intervene?	9
Understanding the individuals involved	
1.1. The identification sheet	10
1.2. The questionnaire	11
1.3. The “street-child system”	15
2. WHERE are we to intervene?	17
The stages and methods of intervention	
Detailed diagram of co-ordinated NGO activities	
Description of the stages-activity diagram	
System of opportunity	
Components of the “career”	
“Career” of a trafficked child	
2.1. From school dropout to street work	24
2.1.1. Material and scholastic social assistance	
<i>Returning to an ordinary class</i>	
<i>Special NPF classes (CEFA project)</i>	
<i>Learning to do homework</i>	
<i>Correspondence courses and vocational apprenticeship</i>	
2.1.2. Preventing indifference to school dropout	
<i>Discussion and persuasion to combat school non-attendance</i>	
<i>Making the most of community traditions to counteract discrimination and a sense of inferiority</i>	
2.2. First departure abroad	34
2.2.1. Redirecting curiosity towards positive stimuli	
2.2.2. Information campaigns about working conditions and risks in Greece	
<i>Prevention campaigns in schools</i>	
<i>Other means of information transfer: “Child-to-child”</i>	

2.3. Return to Albania	40
Coercion	
Lack of resources	
The “active” exit	
2.4. Second departure and subsequent departures	41
With respect to the family	
With respect to job opportunities	
3. HOW to intervene?	43
An intervention based on trust	
3.1. Trust – a key concept	43
3.1.1 Conditions for a trusting relationship	
3.1.2 Mediation before trafficking	
3.1.3 The trafficker-child or trafficker-family relationship	
3.1.4 The debtor-creditor relationship	
3.2. Intervention – a matter of trust	49
<i>Diagram “Understanding the child”</i>	
3.2.1. The participants	
<i>Tdh and the younger generation</i>	
<i>NPF – progress towards individual values</i>	
3.2.2. Balance of teams and skills	
3.2.3. Commitment and participation	
3.2.4. Networking	
3.3 Child welfare in the project	54
3.3.1 A high-risk struggle	
<i>The “foundation cover”</i>	
<i>Collaboration with the police</i>	
3.3.2 Risks involved in the project	
<i>External risks</i>	
4. Action model	57
Real-life stories	58
<i>“My parents were in need”</i>	
<i>“I want to go back to school”</i>	
5. Conclusion and future challenges	61

Introduction

*“Everything has either value or dignity.
Whatever has a value can be replaced by something else which is
equivalent; whatever, on the other hand, is above all value, and
therefore admits of no equivalent, has a dignity.”
(Emmanuel Kant)¹*

The objective of this document is to capitalise on the experience that NPF² and Terre des hommes have gleaned in Albania in the fight against child trafficking since 2000. A first publication described the history and details of this activity³ and thus contributed to exposing a reality which remains, still to this day, largely unknown and which has consequently been the subject of all manner of speculation. In addition to providing information and making recommendations, this document aims more specifically to provide an account of the action model developed by those active in the field. The purpose of this second publication is to specify the manner of intervention and the reasons for intervention, by adopting a more sociological approach rather than a strictly legalistic one. The manner of acting on human interactions indeed depends on the way in which one understands these interactions, and the sociological perspective seems to us to open paths so far little explored, which are, however, likely to generate new knowledge and thus an increasingly refined approach to the actual situation.

This document relates only to helping children in Albania, as the transnational dimension of this type of intervention will be the subject of a third publication (in preparation). Our method consists in highlighting the social factors of the traffic, notably the social interactions and representations surrounding this phenomenon. We thus interpret the situation sociologically, in particular by touching on the trust and social integration aspects, the place of the school and unofficial work, the social status of the child in Albania, or the discrepancy between the legal and social definitions of trafficking.

“According to the legal approach, child trafficking occurs when a child is moved and coerced for the benefit of a third party. However, as currently understood, working abroad is highly valued, even for children. Thus people do not associate this idealised practice with trafficking. They do not necessarily know what really occurs”.

When the NPF and Terre des hommes teams began to work on child trafficking in Albania, they did not apply a pre-established plan of action, since no model then existed. Very little had been done or written on the struggle against child trafficking in the Balkan or Eastern European context. The intervention was thus directly tailored in response to the needs and the specific situation of each child. Even though the activities began by trial and error, they were adapted to each case, each family and each beneficiary.

It was necessary to invent, create and innovate everything from scratch.

Little by little, the experience of the NPF co-ordinators, group-leaders and teachers and the Tdh Head of Mission allowed for more rapid and efficient intervention. Even though every case is different, the situations often end up resembling one another. So, without actually intending to do so, and perhaps without even being aware of it, their comprehension of the phenomenon as a whole nevertheless led to the creation of an action model which in fact

¹ E Kant, *“Fundamental Principles of the Metaphysic of Morals”* (1785), Garnier-Flammarion, Paris, p. 116.

² Ndihmë Për Fëmijët means “Help For Children”

³ *“The trafficking of Albanian children in Greece”*, Terre des hommes, January 2003.

drew on all the principles they had discovered during two-and-a-half years of work with the children and their families. It was in order to understand and reproduce the operation of the team, the principles of actions which they had evolved, albeit involuntarily and unconsciously, that we organised a workshop to capitalise on their experience, in July 2003.

[To capitalise on experience is to recount the path travelled.]

To capitalise means to recount the experience, to pass from doing to explaining, it is to set practice down in a document which provides an account of it and which, through circulation, can then “*make the experience shareable*”.⁴ To capitalise is to put words to what we have done, to our actions and to the principles guiding our actions. In Albania, we understood that to do so it was necessary to take a second look at our understanding of the beneficiaries and our relationship with them. In other words, to truly enter upon the subject of capitalisation, it is necessary to delve into our understanding of the people who benefit, “*because the action evolved from our first impression of their needs*”.⁵ It was thus a question of standing back and, in the light of the experience gained, reviewing the way we initially tackled the question which concerned us and following the thread of our intervention as it evolved according to the successes and failures that we may have had along the way.

Intellectually, our task was to retrace the path they had followed to reach that point. It was thus necessary to set out again from certain specific cases and each time to understand the child involved. Our first step was to interview the beneficiaries. These interviews were then analysed using the “Street-Child System” tool (see point 1.3) so that we could discover the abilities, needs and resources of the various children. This method systematises and accelerates the work of comprehending the physical, environmental and psychological situation of each child, provided that a true relationship of trust can be established with the child. It is also this relationship of trust which makes it possible to intervene by using the children’s resources rather than focusing on their shortcomings. In this way, the interviews held considerably enriched the topics that were then discussed during the workshop.

Our method consist in imagining an intervention using each childs resources

We noticed that, even though they had not explicitly prepared an overall scheme of their mode of intervention, the case workers, more often than not, had already met the needs in an appropriate manner. But by stepping back from daily routine, it is possible to highlight information or even possibly shortcomings in a task that will always

remain difficult and delicate. That is why the first question we posed at the workshop intentionally called for answers in terms of comparison (before/after): “*What has changed?*”. Setting out from this very broad question worked very well and we think that it is even a key to the success of the capitalising workshop in Albania. Indeed, it was essential to set the discussion on the right track from the very outset.

One condition for the success of a capitalisation workshop is to start out with one or more theories. In fact, we worked out our theories from the descriptive data collected through a statistical and social study. This statistical and social study was undertaken on the basis of two distinct supports. On the one hand, there was a cross-analysis of the data from 398 record sheets identifying children who had been victims or were at a high risk of trafficking and, on the other, 1764 questionnaires filled out by teachers and pupils concerning their perception of trafficking before and after prevention sessions. The statistical and social analysis produced questions, ideas and assumptions. All of this subject matter was preserved and synthesised in various topics which were discussed during the workshop. However, it is not enough to have a procedure and initial hypotheses. It is also necessary to create conditions “to trigger” the discussion. To this end, we introduced a technique, called the “extraterrestrial technique”, whereby the participants could, at any time during the workshop, “don an extraterrestrial hat” which entitled them “to raise an extra-terrestrial question”, and thus “naively” to raise points which appeared deceptively obvious or to make points that one would not dare make normally. This technique proved very useful throughout the workshop.

⁴ Pierre de Zutter: “*Stories, knowledge and men*”, Series of files for a debate, No 35, FPH, 1994.

⁵ Vincent Tournecueillert, Terre des hommes Head of Mission in Albania.

The participants in the workshop very much appreciated the opportunity given them to talk collectively about their work and thus to fill the legitimate need for recognition of and assurance about what they were doing. That made it possible for them to continue to progress as they felt that what they were doing was really useful both generally and individually. Indeed, each person intervened at a given point in the chain and it was important to make the most of the work of each individual. That gave both motivation and commitment a fresh boost. It was a way of “recharging the batteries”. Indeed, it is well-known that it is always difficult to determine the exact impact of any intervention on the beneficiaries. Intervention obviously has its limits and inevitably comes up against many obstacles. However, it is not presumptuous to say that partly thanks to the joint action of NPF and Tdh, it was shown that trafficking in Albanian children in Greece is not inevitable.

The task consists of intervening at all stages of trafficking, by means of a complex and diversified network in order to broaden the scope of intervention.

At the same time, now that projects to combat child trafficking are expanding, the considerable growth in the size and number of Terre des hommes teams will require the training of newcomers. They will have to be able to count on the experience of those who prepared the project. However, as the project was prepared case-by-case, according to needs and according to each particular situation, very little has been set down on paper with regard to the mode of intervention. It was, however, difficult to carry out an internal analysis within the project without quickly reverting to the same topics and especially the same ideas that are regularly served up to all visitors passing through the country. It was necessary to take time to discuss them, to explain the details, to clarify modes of intervention and, especially, to write them down because it was a question of sharing all the experience accumulated in the minds of the case workers. They had to reconstruct the path they had followed in order to produce automatic intervention procedures.

The purpose of the workshop was not to produce a list of actions to be carried out for each situation but rather to systematize an action model that had already proved effective, and thus to train new teams.

So it was now just as essential to capitalise in order to be able to take advantage of and make available the experience gained so that we could save time in the training of new case workers. Describing the path travelled avoided having to retrace it from scratch. It was essential to transmit those very action principles which made the project effective.

The strategic parallelism principle implies that, to prevent children dropping out of school and being trafficked, it is necessary to offer the family an immediate advantage. This is necessary initially, since the parents cannot refuse the assistance offered by the trafficker (or the first gifts which create the relation of dependence). There is obviously one striking difference related to reliability - if the trafficker reassures the family by saying that everything will be fine, the technique for making the parents realise that their child is being exploited consists in awakening doubts about the child's situation.

In our work on the ground, we identified a principle that we propose to call “strategic parallelism”, which requires that the means used to combat trafficking must include, as a minimum, the same advantages as those on which or from which the trafficking itself develops:

- no geographical or legal limitation
- a network
- the trust of the parents
- an immediate material advantage for the parents

Strategic parallelism can, however, make the difference only if the promises made by the case workers are, in turn, truly reliable, and that greatly depends on conditions external to the project itself, in particular the policies for ensuring that the schooling and training of young people, on the one hand, are properly suited to the employment they can find or generate, on the other. That is why, the role of States, and in particular of the European Union, concerning social integration policies is crucial, because these policies are essential for preventing marginalization and ultimately trafficking in human beings. This question is even more urgent than the obviously more sensational aspects on which the media are focused today, namely the efforts to rescue and rehabilitate the victims of trafficking which, furthermore, also poses serious challenges to the States when it comes to witness protection.⁶

The need to be effective in co-ordinating child trafficking prevention work also implies sharing a certain sociological comprehension of the phenomenon. The reality of trafficking in human beings is very complex and cannot be reduced merely to a relationship between the exploiters and the exploited. It draws its roots from a socio-historical context and an economic situation whose dynamics can relate to more than one country. It is thus important to draw from the Albanian case certain lessons which extend beyond the tendency to explain away the phenomenon of trafficking by putting it down to a particular “mentality”. At the same time, the description of the model of the activities being conducted in Albania to combat child trafficking aims to provide food for thought, thus making for even more effective action.



⁶ See conclusions and future challenges.

WHY intervene?

Understanding the individuals involved

As we pointed out, to truly embark upon the subject of capitalisation it is necessary to understand the individuals involved in the phenomenon observed. This understanding can be based on an intuitive and general knowledge of the dynamics of the phenomenon, but any relevant action needs a thorough comprehension of the situation. In addition, a single source of information is not enough to cover the question. That is why we triangulate the methods based on cross-referencing data collected by various procedures. In this case, our analysis of the phenomenon is based on the identification-sheet and questionnaire techniques and on the use of a specialised qualitative tool, the “street-child system”. We will explain below the data collected by these three techniques and how we understood the phenomenon with their help. These are elements which give a direction to the intervention, and which enable us to answer the question “why intervene?”.

It is not simply a question of intervening because children should “be saved”. The intervention cannot be reduced to so simple a question. A broader comprehension of the phenomenon also makes it possible to give a more general direction to the intervention. This overall picture thus includes all the participants who, from near or far, participate in the phenomenon of child trafficking. Consequently, when we speak of participants, we mean both the beneficiaries (children, parents) of the intervention and the traffickers against whose activities the project is directed. To understand before judging is the fundamental attitude to have, even including what concerns the trafficker. It is a question of grasping why this participant does this rather than that. This approach indeed makes it possible to situate him or her in a broader (economic, political and social) configuration and thus makes it possible to identify structural and cultural factors that determine his or her activities. That is more useful than simply condemning the traffickers as immoral beings. It is not a question of excusing them but of better understanding how such a phenomenon as child trafficking is simply possible. We will, moreover, see that the responsibility takes different forms according to the place occupied in the network which constitutes the child trafficking chain - pickup, conveyor, exploiter. So the understanding should be raised to the level of the configuration of participants and specific interests because it is on this level of understanding that the effectiveness of a strategy to combat trafficking depends.

It is actually a question of combating the conditions favourable to trafficking and not necessarily, as a preliminary analysis might imply, the traffickers themselves. A head-on attack would indeed be suicidal. Moreover, the proof of this is the difficulty of ensuring the protection of witnesses. It is thus far more urgent and useful to develop a systemic understanding of the trafficking phenomenon. Rather than opposing the deviants and the victims, it is more useful to try to understand what binds them into a specific configuration. This, in fact, relates to social, political and economic causes on which any intervention worthy of its name must be able to act to be truly effective and viable.

1.1. The identification sheet

From nearly 400 identification sheets (398) on children who had been trafficked or were at high risk of being trafficked, we have data on the real situation observed each day by the Terre des hommes community facilitators and NPF teachers. First of all, the families are in very difficult economic situations. Indeed, unemployment hits hardest in the communities which are already marginalized. So it is that 80% of the families whose children are recorded by Tdh or NPF are affected by unemployment. And in half of those, both parents are simultaneously out of work. This unemployment is explained on the one hand by the discrimination which prevails with regard to the Roma and Jevgjit communities.⁷ But it also arises from their low level of education. Indeed, only 6% of the fathers and 3% of the mothers have passed the elementary level (8 years' schooling). The women are far more affected by unemployment. In more than 10% of all cases, the mother raises her children alone. The two biological parents of one-quarter of the children no longer live together. Another 13% live with one of the parents, 5% no longer have either parent, and 6% live in a recomposed family. However, even when both parents are present, the family can sometimes be regarded as unstable; because problems arise when the lack of work renders its living conditions extremely precarious (problems of health, lawlessness, alcoholism, violence, etc.). Sometimes, the parents are themselves victims of other forms of trafficking (prostitution of the mother) as well as the siblings. Moreover, this is why, when a child is found to be at risk, all his or her siblings will also be systematically registered and monitored.



These families also have a housing problem. They are often large families (42% have four or more children) and housing is, in most cases, just one room. This problem is particularly acute in Korça because there are not many buildings. It is estimated that 13,000 families have no home in this town. To date, the poor families have not had to pay for water and electricity in old dilapidated dwellings. But recent Albanian laws require that everyone is to pay. However, these families do not have the means to do so. Many homes which had been nationalised during the Communist period have today been returned to the owners. The families are sometimes lodged in old factories. Those factories are today privatised and the families must leave. The authorities contacted by NPF answered that they did not have the means to relieve these problems and to re-house the expelled families.

The aim of the action being conducted by Terre des hommes and NPF is to reinforce the resistance of both the families and the children to the traffickers

Such are the situations of distress that the community facilitators and teachers face each day. All these economic and social parameters will make the families very vulnerable. They will have considerable trouble in trying to develop resistance to the first temptations offered by the trafficker (often a close family relative). They will be helpless when faced with the trap set for them and will quickly become caught up in a perverse and unhealthy debtor relationship with the trafficker, who will then be able to benefit from this situation to oblige them to entrust their children to him. Our intervention consists above all in reinforcing the resistance of the families and the children to these traffickers.

⁷ "Jevgjit are variously described as a people descended from Coptic migrants who came to Albania from Egypt in the fourth century, disguised as Turks or as assimilated, "non-nomadic" Roma. The Jevgjit/Roma line, regardless of the ethnic origins of either group, displays all the tensions typically arising between assimilated and non-assimilated minorities; although both are rejected by mainstream society, the two groups spend much energy cultivating "the narcissism of the small difference" (Freud). Ultimately, both Jevgjit and Roma live beyond the colour line in Albania and are regarded as similar by the majority. According to the Albanian sociologist Kimet Fetahu, "Roma and Jevgjit are very marginalized. They do the most unskilled and dirty manual labour." in European Romas Right Centre "No record of the case. Romas in Albania" Country reports N°5, July 1997, page 10. http://www.errc.org/rr_nr3_2000

1.2. The questionnaire

Another very helpful aid in understanding the phenomenon consisted of questionnaires addressed to teachers and to pupils and whose objective was to provide an account of how they perceived trafficking, and especially to measure the impact of the prevention sessions. Thus, 313 teachers (191 sensitized and 122 not sensitized) answered one questionnaire, while 1451 children (861 sensitized and 590 not sensitized) answered another questionnaire. The analysis shows different degrees of progress in the knowledge of the phenomenon among the sensitized people. While, in general, prevention increases understanding of the phenomenon, the cross-analysis of the tabulated statistics led to our adopting a hypothesis concerning the social dynamics of trafficking, in particular by comparing tables 2 and 3 of the answers given by the teachers.

Question 2: What do you understand by the expression “child trafficking”? (in %)

NS = not sensitized S = Sensitized	Elbasan/Cerrik		Korça/Pogradec		Total		
	NS	S	NS	S	NS	S	Total
Adoption "trade"	21	13	15	21	19	18	18
Organ Trafficking	31	28	34	29	32	28	29
Sexual exploitation	23	19	26	20	24	20	21
Illegal activities (theft, begging)	25	39	25	30	25	34	30
Other: Sale of children	0	0	16	0	6	0	2

In table 2, one notes that the dominant response for those who were not sensitized was organ trafficking, while those who were sensitized identified the illegal activities as the dominant content of child trafficking. Therefore the prevention sessions brought about a change of the image the teachers had of trafficking.

Conversely, as for the causes of trafficking, there were very few differences between the answers given by the people who had attended prevention sessions and those who had not:

Question 3: In your opinion, why does “child trafficking” exist in Albania? (in %).

NS = not sensitized S = Sensitized	Elbasan/Cerrik			Korça/Pogradec			Total		
	NS	S	Total	NS	S	Total	NS	S	Total
Economic and social conditions (poverty, unemployment...)	52	59	56	60	57	58	55	58	57
Level of parental education (information)	27	27	27	12	21	18	21	24	22
Organised crime networks (Mafia)	8	3	5	2	8	6	5	6	6
Absence of child- protection legislation (law, corruption, borders...)	11	8	9	10	11	11	11	10	10
Bad conditions in the State of Albania	0	0	0	11	0	4	5	0	2
Others	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	3	3



But especially, by comparing these two tables, we realised that there is a greater convergence in the explanations of the phenomenon of trafficking than in the definition itself. In other words, whereas those answering the questionnaire did not agree much on “what” (the phenomenon was), they provided very homogeneous answers on “why” (the phenomenon exists). Although there is greater diversity in the answers concerning what trafficking is, all the elements identified as trafficking are nevertheless related by the organised bond between the victims and the deviants. However, these are not the elements which are initially advanced to explain the phenomenon, but more general and vague causes (socio-economic conditions). Indeed, practically 80% of those answering agreed in mentioning “socio-economic” reasons (poverty and level of education) to explain realities as different as organ trafficking, sexual exploitation, begging, or the adoption “trade”.

This corresponds to a more general tendency to refer initially to socio-economic causes when trying to give some content to abstract concepts. The word “trafficking” is precisely one of these abstract concepts, as are the concepts of poverty, development, etc. These terms indeed cover a vague reality which is so broad and macro-social that one tends to specify them by other elements which are just as broad and macro-social, that we will therefore call, for example “economic difficulties”. By way of “reasons”, one therefore initially refers to abstract “conditions” for the emergence of the phenomena, and only then, possibly, more precise “responsibilities” for the organisation for these phenomena. The reason or the cause is thus associated with a number of predetermined general conditions before being associated with any people in particular.

Moreover, this tendency to identify general conditions (poverty) and not initially precise responsibilities as being the cause is observed wherever significant inequalities in power relations exist. Likewise, this is often observed in the problems of street children.

One can thus assume that it is the power itself which originates this kind of representation of reality, where a certain “fatalism” is also expressed in placing the blame on general conditions that depend on impersonal and abstract economic mechanisms (unemployment, poverty), and not on more precise individual and institutional responsibilities. In this case, it is striking to see that all the elements identified as trafficking are based on the concept of organised crime (even though this may not be explicit) whereas when it is a question of explaining this organised crime, only abstract mechanisms and not concrete people are mentioned. So finally the blame is placed on elements which are not the true causes but rather just the conditions which favour the phenomenon.

This is explained by the disparity between the legal definition and the social definition of trafficking. When referring to trafficking with the three criteria of the legal definition, one is closer to the point of view from which one

will identify the individuals and institutions responsible for this traffic. When, on the contrary, one has a “social definition” of “trafficking” as the event of going to “work for a third party abroad”, one explains that by the reason which prompts this – poverty.

While our legal definition refers to the responsibility of the people and institutions, the social definition draws on the notion of inevitable consequences to explain trafficking - it is due to “poverty”

The use of the word “trafficking” is like a labelling process: we cast a “legalistic” eye on a reality which is viewed from a social perspective as relatively legitimate: we talk of “working for a third party”, and not of exploitation, in order to rise out of poverty. We also see that it is only when people realise that “working for a third

party” is not favourably considered by the community facilitators, that they hide it. It is thus the power to label a reality (here, with the term “trafficking”) which modifies behaviour. In other words, the very use of the word “trafficking” already reflects this power relation between “the case worker” and “the beneficiary”. That poses no problem of coherence for the intervention as long as this position - against the exploitation of children - is actually followed up by viable alternatives (training and formal work).

In order to increase the chances of offering viable alternatives, which strongly depend on conditions external to the project, it seems necessary to us to extend our consideration of trafficking by more thoroughly understanding the social dynamics underlying it.

It is true that poverty is favourable to the emergence of phenomena such as child trafficking or street children, but it is not a sufficient cause in itself. Not all poor children in the world are street children or victims of traffickers. We do not know the personal issues (individuals) or symbolic systems (social representations, values) which attract children to the street (motivations). The street is simply seen as a dangerous place and so we consequently avoid thinking that the child can sometimes find a situation there which he or she will consider temporarily subjectively better than that which he or she had in socially more acceptable settings (family, school, etc). This point of view is possible only if we refer to real situations, not only to idealised representations of the family and school. In fact, idealised representations often prevent us from regarding children as responsible beings who have opted for the street and from evaluating their situations by making a regular assessment of the advantages and disadvantages of the places they frequent and the relations they may have there. The child is then regarded merely as an object or a victim, and not as a subject or a responsible individual.

Emotional censorship (to refuse to consider that the child victim could have made a choice, which happened to be the wrong choice, but there was nevertheless a choice...) thus results in a blindness towards the nature of trafficking as a process. Indeed, trafficking needs to be seen as a process and not as a state. The state of the trafficked child blinds the observer to the stages which led this child to this situation. If, on the contrary, one regards the phenomenon as a process, i.e., as an interaction, marked by specific configurations of interactions between individuals, then one can consider that the early stages certainly also included a choice on the part of the child, a motivation, before the interaction between the child and the adult became a persecutor-victim relationship. The child might have wanted to follow an uncle or an acquaintance because she wanted to do something for her family, to contribute to the family income, to show that she could make out alone, to be as able as the others, etc... It is only after this initial agreement that the child (and her family) are misled by the trafficker. But he who is now a “trafficker” in our eyes was initially a “friend» in the eyes of the child.

Likewise, when speaking of trafficking, it seems that the question of the child’s choice is ignored. The term “child trafficking” is emotionally loaded.

What underlies this move from friendship to abuse is the question of trust. It is astonishing to note that no one puts forward this reason: none of those who answered the questionnaire said that child trafficking existed because children are too trusting in adults.

This silence on the question of trust seems to be a key element in what the community facilitators are saying. With the fall of Communism, Albanian society realised that it had lived entire decades within an organised lie. We consider that this manner of overcoming the incredible loss of confidence constitutes a powerful social factor which, associated with the code of honour, in fact supported child trafficking. It seems to us that we may assume the “great treachery” created an urgent need to re-establish trust and that such a need resulted in an over-investment in close relationships. This may have contributed to sweeping aside the requirements which previously were normal in everyday interactions, in particular the ability to require others to offer certain guarantees in exchange for the trust placed in them to do or refrain from doing something.

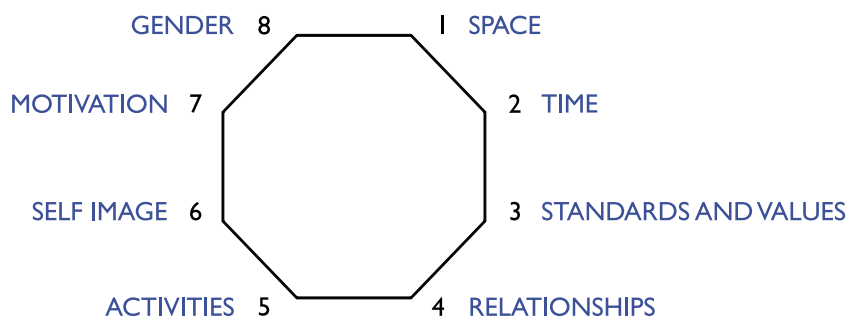
This is what one can call the “unconditional trust syndrome”. This is as if expressing a doubt or simply a reservation about the intentions of others were tantamount to causing the others to assume a share in the responsibility for the national misfortune. Subjectively, the trafficking and abuse of Albanian children could be explained partly by an interaction marked by the prevalence of the code of honour (not to sully the reputation of another person begins by not doubting him) in a context where children are educated in trust by adult generations which have themselves lost this trust. It could be the very need of adults to overcome their trauma which may be contributing to an excess of trust by children in their elders.

1.3. The “street-child system”

There is a technical tool which is particularly suitable for the qualitative analysis of a child being trafficked, or at risk of being trafficked, and it has been taken from the “Children in a street situation” area and from the approach developed for this matter by Tdh together with the University of Fribourg. This is the “street-child system”, a method which can be directly transposed to the area which here concerns us. This conceptual tool enables a better understanding of the relationship between the child and the immediate environment. It was evolved by Riccardo Lucchini, Sociology Lecturer at Fribourg University, on the basis of his observations on the ground in Rio de Janeiro⁸, and it is currently being applied in the Terre des Hommes “Children in street situations” projects.

The “Street Child System” tool allows for a finer knowledge of the real experience of the children and thus better equips us to cope with it in an appropriate way.

The following diagram represents the “street-child system”, with its 8 dimensions (they are not numbered in any order of preference):



We noted that this diagram is perfectly applicable to Albanian children being trafficked or at risk of becoming victims of trafficking. Dimensions of the street (or trafficking) experience can be specified for each child, by discussing them with him or her. By taking individual cases, one can work back to the more general macrosocial factors.

We never observe social, economic and political factors directly, because they are abstract elements. It is the observation of concrete behaviour, of individual interactions, which informs us of these macrosocial elements. Indeed, individual behaviour is at the same time the reflection and the component of a social framework. We can thus set out from the observation and thorough analysis of a few individuals in order to understand many things about the social environment in which we find ourselves.

⁸ See R. Lucchini: “Street Child. Identity, sociability, drugs”, Geneva/Paris: Droz, 1993. The “street-child system” then gave rise to comparisons with Montevideo (Lucchini), Mexico City (Lucchini) and Shanghai (Stoecklin).



We applied the “Street-child system” (SCS) data-analysis technique to 5 children (3 in Elbasan, 2 in Korça) interviewed by the project leaders. The use of this tool enabled us to perceive that it constitutes a capitalisation technique. Indeed, the exercise of establishing profiles makes it possible to move from the specific to the general. The individual case can indeed highlight aspects of the problems which go beyond its specific situation and which explain a number of factors. This highlights elements which would remain hidden if one were not sufficiently thorough in analysing a particular case. That is what happens, in fact, when one reduces a person to his or her personal characteristics in terms of character, whereas it is much richer and more instructive to try to see what that person has in common with others (profile).

For example, we were struck by the inability of a 16-year-old girl to answer the question “what is more valuable than money?”. After we put the question again, this girl answered “after money, there is my bicycle, but before, I do not know”. Taken in isolation, this answer can lead to all kinds of interpretations. One could easily have concluded that this girl, for whom obviously nothing replaced a banknote, suffered from an exacerbated utilitarian view of things. However, nothing could be further from the truth than this interpretation. Indeed, if we connect this response to another item of information concerning her mother who lived far away in Tirana, one can better understand what this girl was actually saying: to go to Tirana one needs money (to take the bus), it is too far to go by bike. For this girl, nothing was more important than money since it was money that enables her to go to see her mother. Her attitude to money was conditioned by an enormous emotional need. There was absolutely nothing utilitarian in her answer; it was, on the contrary, extremely emotional.

So it can be seen that if one cross-references information in a systemic way (with the SCS), one begins to better understand the individuals involved and in particular one avoids jumping to hasty conclusions that are often very far from reality. From this particular case, we can thus highlight an aspect which is probably general, but which is often implicit (not explicitly mentioned), namely that money could, for certain children, become the factor that makes it possible for them to keep in touch with members of their family. In the minds of these children, money can reunite what was torn asunder, it can repair what was broken, it can draw attention and bring emotional rewards. Even if it is not what one might hope for in a child, and even if this point of view is an illusion, it is the way these children actually think and it is with this point of view in mind that we must make contact with them.

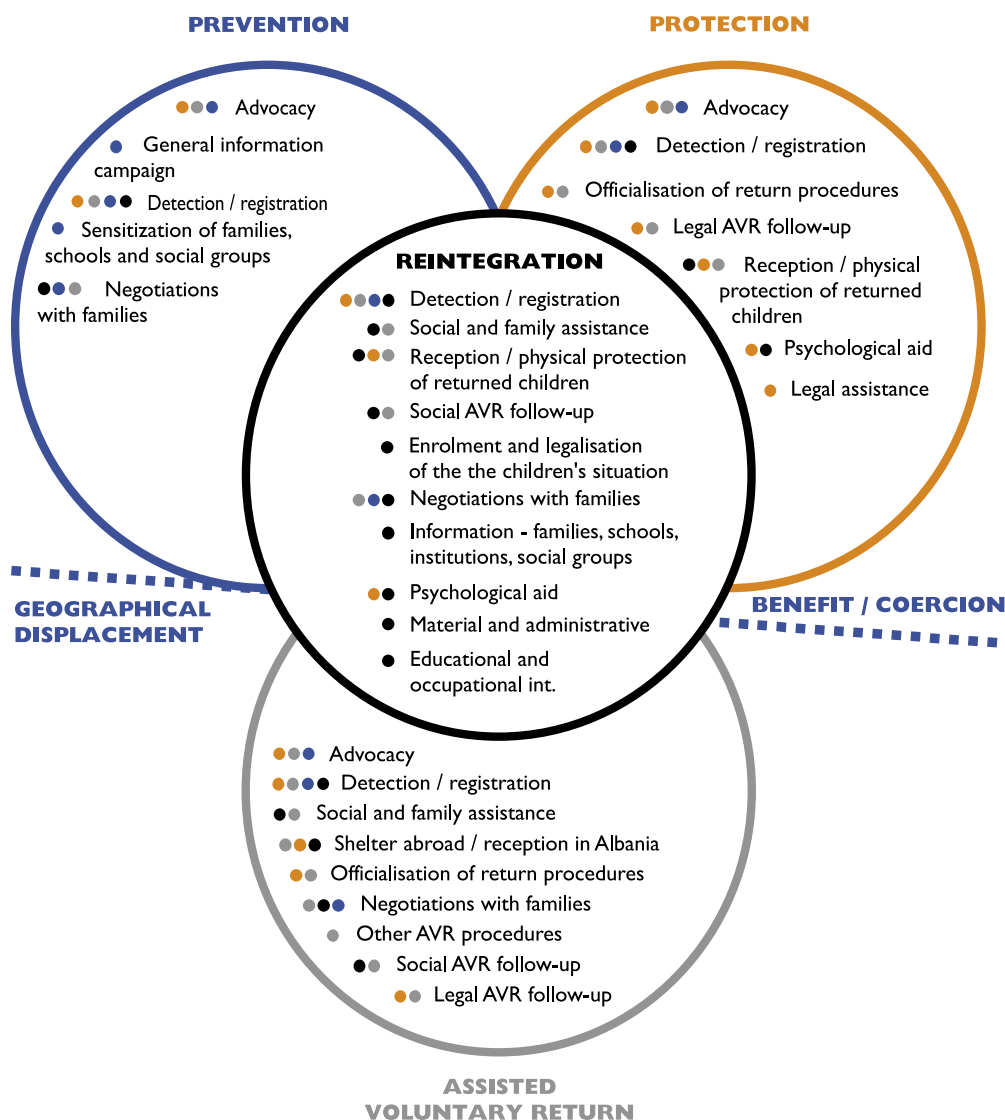
The intervention must set out from the children’s point of view. This example among others shows that starting from such a reference network (SCS), many clues, facts or personal testimonies, make it possible to work back to elements of a more general nature.

WHERE to intervene?

The stages and methods of intervention

The project activities are as follows:

Detailed diagram of co-ordinated NGO activities (prevention, protection, Assisted Voluntary Return, reintegration⁹).



⁹ Working group for the Interministerial conference on child trafficking in Albania, Tirana – November 2001: Ndihmë Për Fëmijët, Children of the world DH, Terre des hommes

Description of the diagram of co-ordinated NGO activities – After analysing the phenomenon and the activities conducted by the organisations respectively involved in combating child trafficking in Albania, four areas of action clearly appear: Prevention, Protection, Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) and Reintegration. The final, reintegration circle is deliberately placed in the centre in order to confirm its priority. It is indeed the “heart of NGO activities”.

The breakdown of activities by fields of intervention clearly shows their interaction. One of the activities appears in each of the four circles (Registration). That means that the NGOs must agree on common detection and registration tools.

The majority of the activities are necessary in two or three of the circles (negotiation with the families, advocacy, etc), and some are useful in only one circle. This interaction is dense and shows the need for the creation of a fifth line of work: co-ordination between the NGOs and the public services. This line of work, concerning only the case workers and not the children, does not appear at this stage of conceptualising the diagram of intervention.

What stages of trafficking and the corresponding activities do TdH and NPF cover with the children and the families?

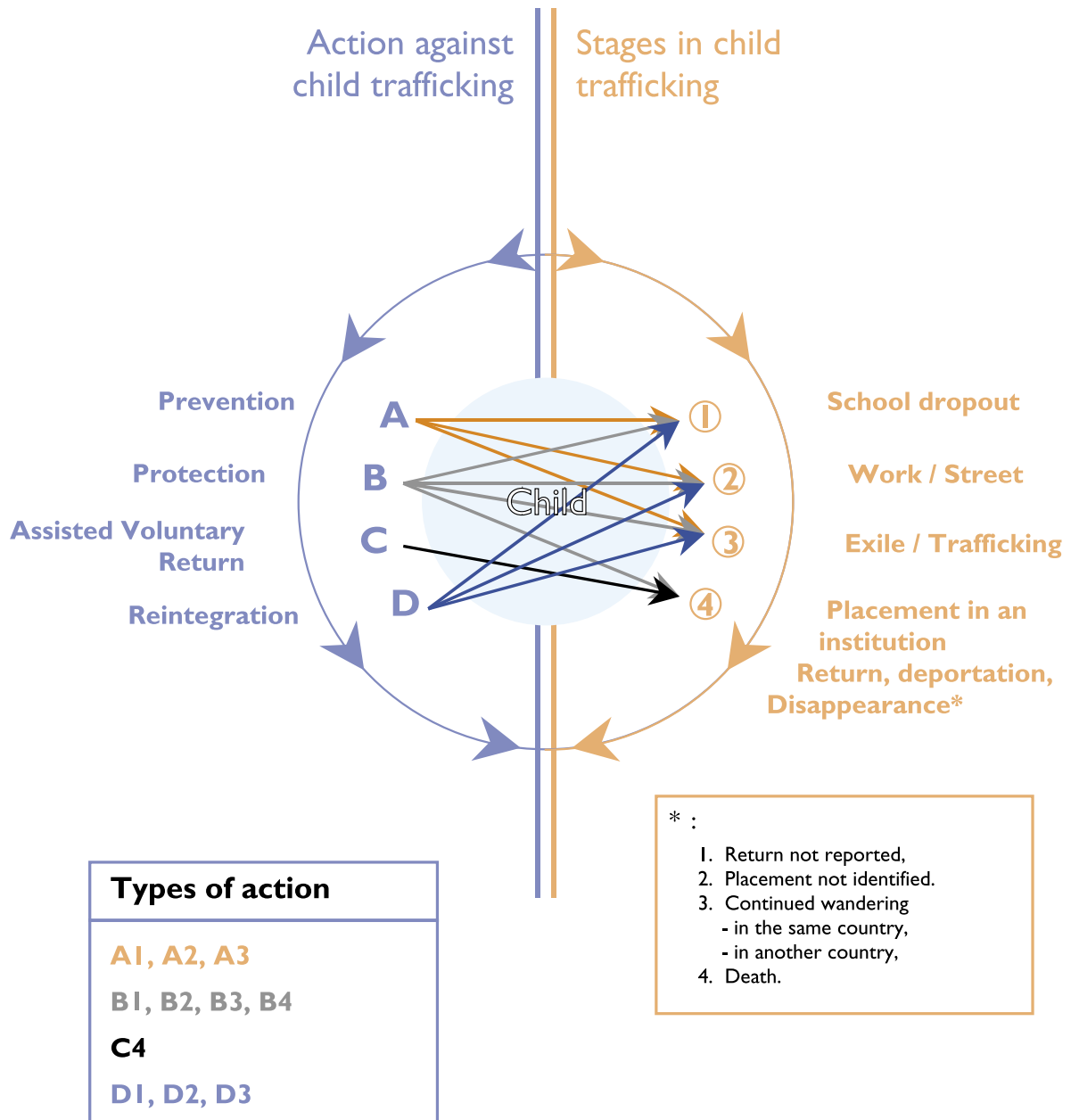
Four major stages in the phenomenon of trafficking:

- 1) the child drops out of school// risk of recruitment
- 2) the child goes to work in the street// risk of exploitation
- 3) the child decides to exile him/herself, to go abroad// risk of trafficking
- 4) the child wants to return to Albania// risk of disappearance



STAGE-ACTIONS DIAGRAM

Actions at the various stages of child trafficking¹⁰



¹⁰ Working group for the Interministerial Conference on Child Trafficking in Albania, Tirana – November 2001: Ndhinë Për Fëmijët, Children of the world DH, Terre des hommes

Description of the stages-activity diagram: the four fields of intervention have been created according to the known stages of children at risk of being trafficked: school dropout, street work, exile and having been trafficked and finally the subsequent events updated by the testimony of the children themselves (Placement in and assimilation into an institution, informal return or return by deportation, and disappearance).

From this diagram, 11 types of intervention directly related to the stages of the child can be defined. Child protection cutting across to the four stages clearly appears as a guideline.

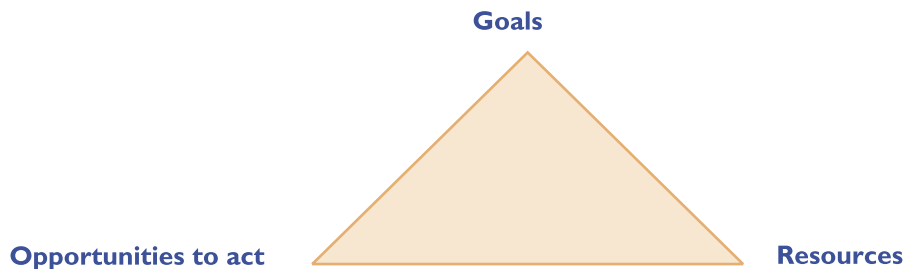
During the workshop, it was possible to take this somewhat mechanical diagram, which does not exactly reflect the reality of the project, a little further. Indeed, by taking account of the subjectivity of the children involved, the project takes on a dynamic dimension. By considering that the motivation of the child is essential for him or her to move from one stage to another, it is a question of better seeing whether the answers which the project provides to the motivation of the child at each of these stages can be improved. Indeed, it is a matter of helping the child to become instrumental in making her own life choices, in discovering her capabilities and values, and in understanding her motivation.

In order to better understand the children, it is necessary not only to objectively pinpoint the stage of the trafficking they are at, but also how they subjectively describe their personal biography. It is especially by understanding their subjective views that the project can be armed to suitably direct the children and thus to increase the chances of removing them from trafficking. The essential question here is to know how much room for real manoeuvre the child has at each stage of the trafficking. Here, it should be noted that, for the second stage, we assume that the child could have a certain margin of manoeuvre with respect to his or her departure, that he or she was really active in that decision, albeit to a lesser extent than at the other stages. We know, of course, that sometimes children are given practically no chance to express themselves in such a decision. But the intervention is aimed at the child and so is necessary to try to reinforce his or her “clout” in the family. It also seems decisive to involve the parents given the role they can play as mediators at this stage between the trafficker and the child.

The principle of motivation is essential if the child is to be regarded as an active participant, as a subject and not an object

If we consider M. Cusson’s diagram called the “system of opportunity”, one can see the motivation of the actors as a triad connecting their resources (physical, social, cultural, cognitive, emotional), their objectives, and the opportunities to act which arise.

System of opportunity (M. Cusson)¹¹



When one of these three elements is missing or is defective, motivation is in crisis. This diagram representing the system of individual motivation allows a more complete understanding of the motivation of each individual. Applied to the field which concerns us, one can understand how working in Greece (a chance to do something) can appear providential for the individual who wants to “help his family” (goal) by showing “what he is capable of” (resources).

¹¹ M. Cusson, “Why delinquents?”, Paris: Colin, 1981, p. 168.

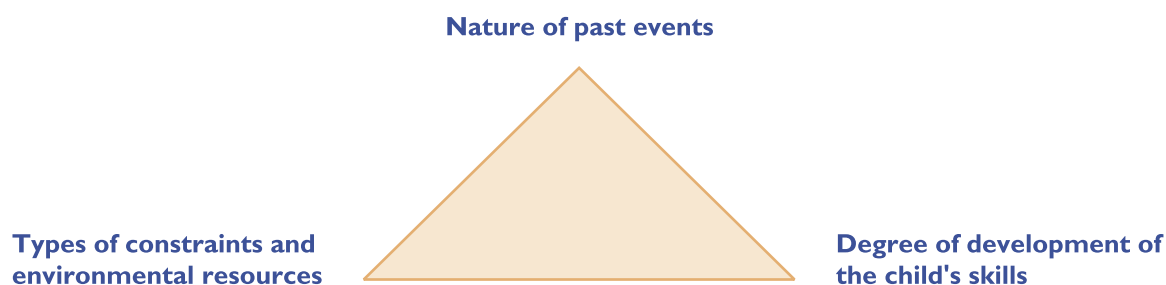
It is precisely because the opportunities to act (to contribute to the family income) are all too rare in Albania that he thinks of trying his luck in Greece or of sending a member of the family there, while not giving a thought to questions relating to the working conditions that actually await the children there.

Before discovering the real working conditions in Greece, the child is thus often “motivated” to go there. So it can be seen that the term “trafficking” reduces the whole process to the result – the child is actually displaced, coerced and exploited. But by applying the label “trafficking” to the objective path followed by the child, the subjective path followed by the child is also included, and the essential aspects which are precisely those which would enable us better to help the child and the family to escape the spiral in which they have become embroiled, are left to one side. It is a question of considering how, at each stage, the child reacts to what is happening. The essential questions to understand the social dynamics and interactions at work in the trafficking process are thus the following: What margin of manoeuvre does the child have at each stage of the process? What motivations does the child have to reach the various stages? Do the stages of trafficking form a repetitive cycle? Should we speak of a trajectory in which the child is a mere object, or can we use the concept of “career”, in which the child is also active?

The question is whether we can speak about a trajectory or career in the case of a trafficked child. Is the child passive or active in the process?

The term “trajectory” implies that the children have no control over what happens to them. It is like a ball that has been thrown. Their path will depend only on the external factors they encounter on their way. Whereas with the concept of “career”, one supposes that the children have a certain margin of manoeuvre, that they have an influence over the decisions which will bind them. It is important to specify that no-one is ever entirely active or passive in life since external elements always have an influence and our very behaviour also plays a role, tiny as it may be. But it is a question of seeing what the major tendency of the course of a trafficked child is. Certain stages are more subject to the child’s own evaluation and decisions. It is on these that we shall need to intervene to modify the direction of his or her future. At the other stages, the objective will be to increase the children’s margin of manoeuvre so that they can take a more active part in choosing their options. It is from this practical point of view that the concept of “career” opens more opportunities than does that of “trajectory”.

The components of “career”¹²



The nature of past events, as well as the constraints and resources of the current environment, can atrophy – or on the contrary stimulate – the development of the child’s skills, in particular cognitive skills (sense of criticism). This is precisely what has to be determined case-by-case.

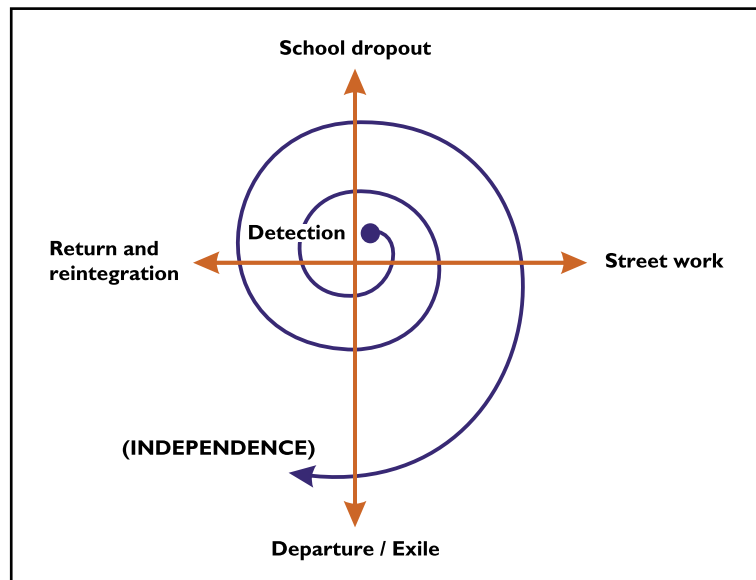
¹² D. Stoecklin, “Street children in China”, published by Karthala, Paris, 2000, p. 317.

This systemic approach to the relations between the career components is useful for intervention. Skills could indeed not be understood without considering the other two elements. Likewise, the nature of past events can change in the child's mind according to his or her current experience. Lastly, the types of constraints and resources in the immediate environment are themselves modifiable by strategies and hence so are the skills acquired by the child. In fact, all the specific histories of children victims of trafficking can be "reviewed" and analysed through this representation of the concept of "career". Then new questions arise. Are those children that "actively exit" the trafficking situation (voluntary return) those which have more skills and, if so, are these skills related to the nature of past events or more so to the constraints and resources of their current environment?

For example, it was seen that the "playing resource" introduced by the Greek partner, ARSIS, did not have any impact (the children wanted to continue earning money) in inducing them to actively extricate themselves from the trafficking situation. If we consider that the children must firstly take stock afresh of past events (in the family, for example) in order to be motivated to return, then we see clearly that it is not the playing activities that will help them to do so but rather giving them a chance to talk to someone because it is by listening to them that one in fact gives the child an opportunity to make an assessment. Though we still have to make space and time to listen....

Do the stages form a cycle? To answer this question, we again need to consider the motivation of the individual. For example, in the case of a child victim of trafficking that returns to Albania, goes back to school, then drops out only to leave again, it is necessary to distinguish the motives for the first departure from those of the second departure. With prior experience, the situation of the children has changed and their motives will also have evolved. It is possible that they think that they can fend for themselves the second time round in meeting what they consider a responsibility – to contribute to the family income. Consequently, we should consider that for the child each departure is subjectively different. So we cannot speak of a cyclical movement. No two stages are experienced in the same way. And so the representation of this "career" takes the form of a spiral:

"Career" of a trafficked child



The spiral represents the child's fate, which can be negative or positive. The beginning of the spiral is the point of detection and the registration of the child by the project. The end of the spiral can symbolize the acquisition of independence, becoming an adult. The children then really take charge of their own lives. But this can imply various possibilities. They may die, disappear, enter more complex, more clandestine, more organised networks, but they can also return to Albania and fit back into school or an apprenticeship and find work or set up a small business. The objective of Terre des hommes and NPF is that they should choose the return or non-departure option as the case may be.

The arrows (in red) represent the accumulation of skills, which increase with experience. The spiral diagram helps understand this through its concentric form, even though, in reality, these stages do not always follow one another in the same order; each child does not pass through all the stages and not always in the same order. For example, on dropping out of school for the second time, the child may immediately go abroad again without passing through

street work in Albania. This diagram makes it possible to understand that, even if the children find themselves at the same stage several times over, they will not have the same motivations each time. The objective stage that the children are at does not make it possible to deduce how they experience it subjectively.

This diagram is very useful for intervention because it makes it possible to realise the necessity of working with the children in accordance with their skills, because it is those skills which actively condition their motivation. It is a question of recognising the skills acquired by the children and of channelling them into positive activities meeting their needs. The children's skills are essential resources. The concept of time is also of primary importance. It is necessary to match the activities to the needs according to the point at which the children are in their career. That is related to the fate of the child. The idea is precisely to follow the children throughout their "career" and not to give them sporadic help that will then be dropped or which will no longer be suitable because the child has evolved. The child must be taken into care as soon as possible but that care can be continued for a long time.

The children's careers should rather be compared with a spiral. At each stage, they acquire new skills. They increase the circle of their skills and the places they frequent. They will react differently in future if they find themselves in the same situation.

[Sometimes, it is even the family which we should try to make independent.]

Here, in this idea of following up on the child's fate, we find two important points that helped structure the project from its inception – on the one hand, the case-by-case approach, which will make it possible to better adapt to each child and each moment in the child's life and, on the other, the registration. The latter is indeed present in all areas of intervention (prevention, protection, repatriation....). This just goes to show that, right from the start of the project, the concept of follow-up was already fundamental. Our systemic models (SCS, opportunity system, career diagram) simply induced us to (re)visit the fundamental aspects of intervention and enabled us to raise significant questions which further nourish and improve our reflection and action.



2.1. From school dropout to street work

This first move is crucial. Indeed, children being trafficked or at high risk of being trafficked are mainly school dropouts (one-third of the high-risk children are more than three years behind and almost two-thirds have more than one year's lag). This dropping out of school can be for various reasons. When the reasons are what one could describe as pragmatic, such as the economic situation of the family or the academic failure of the children, the response in these cases must be immediate. This takes the form of social material or scholastic assistance. But the reasons can be different, deeper and less obvious. There are cultural reasons – the existence of a tradition of not attending school in the communities affected by trafficking, of discrimination within the schools or a true conflict of standards between the family and the school. In these cases, the responses are mainly of a psychosocial nature. Whatever the reason, dropping out of school will give rise to an upheaval for the child who loses a basic right and becomes a child "at risk". This is why intervention at this stage is of primary importance. Here are the actions which have been jointly set up by NPF and Terre des hommes to cope with each source of school dropout.



2.1.1. Social material and scholastic assistance

This help aims at preventing school dropouts. As we saw previously, the families are in very difficult economic situations. That is why they will be sensitive to the offers of the traffickers. The families are especially looking for a way out of their misery. The trafficker will take advantage of this distress situation. He will offer the family the solutions which are supposed to bring it immediate advantages. He often makes an advance payment before leaving and promises to send the money that the child will earn.

But most of the time, the families actually receive but very little of what the child really brings the trafficker – that is if the trafficker agrees to actually send a share of the income.

To be able to prevent the child dropping out of school and being trafficked, we too have to offer an immediate advantage. This is necessary at the outset. Since the parents cannot refuse the assistance of the trafficker (or the first gifts at the origin of the dependency relationship), because of the precariousness of their economic situation, we must help them develop a resistance. And the first way they can resist him is for them to be able to do without his assistance. Terre des hommes and NPF will thus grant the families material aid. The teams will distribute monthly assistance in kind (food, clothing, school books or heating wood, etc.) so that the family need not depend on the trafficker for products to meet its basic needs.

When the trafficker asks in exchange that the child be entrusted to him, the reciprocity of the relationship is not guaranteed since, in the majority of cases, the trafficker sends the family the child's earnings only during the first one or two months, then no more. Moreover, he does not guarantee the child's working conditions abroad.

For NPF and Terre des hommes, it is important to stress that the organisation can be relied upon to keep its word. But it also expects a guarantee in return. Indeed, the material aid provided by the two organisations will be conditional upon the parents sending their children to school. The parents' motivation takes the form of a short-term advantage. It is a means of making them aware for the future.

Why aid in kind and not in cash? Both organisations refuse in principle to give cash but will rather provide the family with food. The help is not very significant and will not make the family dependent on the organisations (This help is, moreover, kept at a cash value lower than or equal to the sums distributed by the public social services.) They must all the same try to find work. The problem is, as we saw, their lack of vocational training. The assistance provides only the barest essentials they need to survive. However, certain families demand a sum of money at the outset in order to become independent thereafter. But that is refused as a matter of principle because such a system of assistance assumes equal treatment for all the families and they do not all have the ability to manage the money straight away. Inequality could lead to a true break with those families that are refused financial assistance. The only exception is sometimes to pay rent on their dwelling. But direct financial assistance is refused for several reasons. First of all, in certain families where there are problems of alcoholism, it would not be certain that the money was really used to benefit the child. Further, the families are piecemeal and it would sometimes be difficult to know to whom to give the money. The money might be given where the child used to live, yet he or she may go and live somewhere else. Lastly, families have many problems in managing the money. It is quickly spent and not spread over the month. This help, which is at first provisional, can be sometimes be continued as long as the children are vulnerable and have not yet reached their eighth year of schooling or acquired any vocational skills.

In parallel with material aid to families, the project offers the children help with their schooling so that they can catch up or avoid failure, this being one of the reasons for dropping out of school. Assistance can be given to these children at various stages of their schooling. Logically, it will be necessary to keep the children at school to prevent them from being tempted to leave to work abroad. But when the children have been trafficked, they must be reintegrated into society. And, whatever their mode of return (voluntary and alone, by the police or through Terre des hommes by assisted voluntary return), returning to school is an essential stage in reintegration. It is mainly NPF which works actively on school reintegration. The methods of reintegration are varied:

- **Return to an ordinary class**

The child can be directly returned to an ordinary class with other children, if he or she has the necessary ability. This is followed-up with the teacher. NPF checks whether the child goes to school regularly or whether he or she often plays truant. In the latter case, they organise a home visit to find out the reasons for these absences.

- **Special NPF classes (CEFA project)**

There can be many obstacles to the return of children to an ordinary class. For example, they may never have been to school. Or else, if they left school very early, they may have a school level which is much too low for their age.

Cash help would cut the appetite for work. This money would be spent but not reinvested. Assistance in kind seems more effective. In the case of a child who has already been trafficked and must be returned to school, the material aid will inevitably have to replace the money brought in by the child because the problem is that the child will gradually have become a source of income that the family can no longer do without. Without material aid, the child would not go to school. Conversely, it is quite possible to provide capital in the case of children starting out in an occupation after training. They must then have all the chances on their side to extricate themselves from the trafficking situation, but also to extricate their families with them.

They would be put in a class with much younger children and would quickly lose any motivation. With the assistance of the Swiss Agency for Development and Co-operation (SDC), special alternating education and training classes have been set up by NPF. These CEFA classes are integrated into the State schools. The children must thus respect the same work schedules as the ordinary classes. They work according to a programme approved by the Ministry of Education. The classes are collective, i.e. they include various classes and thus pupils who have different levels and ages (in general 12 to 15, but they can be older). The first and third classes work together as do the second and fourth. What is special about these classes is that there are two teachers for a score of children on average. The first stage is to start by finding out what knowledge the pupils have already acquired since, in this system, the important thing is to adapt to the level of the children. Then each teacher will deal with children of the same level. While one teacher will give a general education, another will be able to help those which have learning difficulties. They are given adapted work to do so that they can make up for lost time. The treatment will be different according to characteristics of the children in each subject. It is also possible, in these classes, to let the children have their say so that they can talk about any problems they may possibly have in their families or the experiences they have had. Their psychological situation is sometimes fragile and calls for special attention, understanding and sympathy.

In these classes, as in ordinary classes, the attendance of the children is carefully monitored. If a pupil is absent, the NPF teacher will be able to visit the parents' home to investigate the reasons for his or her absence. If the child is sick, the teacher will then serve as a welfare officer and will then be able to advise and inform the parents. She will even be able to take them to a doctor. This visit will be made after the school day is over, after the classes. If a teacher encounters a problem with a child, she shares it with all the team which tries to find case-by-case solutions.

- **Learning to do homework**

Certain children can remain behind after school so that the NPF teachers can help them do their homework, but without overloading them. This situation must be voluntary; they should not be obliged to stay behind. This help can be fun, in the form of a game. Indeed, the child should not feel punished, but, on the contrary, supported. But it also happens that they can also be taught to do homework at home. In this case, it is rather more in the form of advice on how to work at home, how to set out the working area. The children must be encouraged. They should not feel out of phase with their friends. They should not feel incapable. It is still a question of making the most of what they are able to do rather than disparaging them and highlighting their weaknesses.

The CEFA schools project teaches homework discipline to children between 12 and 15. But there is another project, financed by UNICEF and implemented by an NPF team. This provides training in doing homework, but for the

younger children (from 6 to 12). Once a week, work is done on the International Convention of the Rights of the Child and subjects such as violence or child trafficking are covered. This project is intended more to prevent school dropouts, rather than to reintegrate the children. It is located upstream of the phenomenon.

Often, a school principal refuses to admit children during the course of the school year (repatriates from abroad or those who gave up school but ended up in the street in Albania) because he thinks that these children will, in a few months, increase the number of school dropouts. School dropout is the subject of an official report to the Education Authority of each city. One can also add the known phenomenon of discrimination and negligence towards this category of child (which UNICEF calls "latent school dropout"). Reintegration cases work out positively if an NPF project is active in the school and if the child is integrated into NPF (CEFA or UNICEF) classes. We do not know of a successful case of integration in a school in which the NPF does not intervene.

Visits to families in their homes are opportunities to do social work. The teachers can assist the families with very diverse subjects such as filling out forms, talking about hygiene, health, etc.



- **Correspondence courses and the vocational apprenticeship**

For NPF, acquiring a basic education is essential. The first four years are taken in normal State school classes or in the special CEFA project classes. But when the children are too old (over 15-16), another means exists: correspondence courses. That still enables them to acquire this essential minimum education but they can, at the same time, learn a practical occupation which will subsequently enable them to find work. Those which avail themselves of these correspondence courses must go to an apprenticeship course every day. But one of the specific characteristics of Albania due to the trafficking situation is that certain children will undergo vocational training when they are much younger. This is also one way of adapting to the child's specific abilities. Even young children that have been trafficked and have worked will have acquired certain skills. They generally want to show what they are capable of and what they can do. But unlike the older children taking correspondence courses, they will practise these activities only occasionally and will continue to attend classes. They will thus have made the most of their skills while acquiring a basic education.

In the NPF team, in addition to the teachers, there are also people who are called practical vocational advisers. There are approximately a dozen different specialised practical vocational activities: embroidery, sewing, cosmetics, hairstyling, blacksmithing, carpentry, tyre repair shops, bicycle repair, shoe-making, plumbing, welding and grill repairing, door and window work, etc. Some are meant rather more for girls and others for boys. These children are in fact taken on in private workshops. The children's activities are followed up.

NPF undertakes to remunerate the instructor who agrees to take in the children and teach them his trade. NPF must also provide material (raw materials) so that the child can practice. NPF also looks to the good relations between the child and the instructor who then takes him or her in. The NPF team confers with the instructor and the child and tries to solve any problems which may arise. At the end of the practice, an assessment is made. This helps the youngster to acquire knowledge and also discipline and a taste for work. Sometimes, during the apprenticeship period, the instructor may give an apprentice some money if he considers that the child has worked well.

It is also necessary that their training correspond to the needs of the labour market. For that reason, the older children, aged 15-16 years or more, are encouraged to try to understand the labour market. They begin, as soon as they have acquired adequate practice, to actively seek employment. Sometimes, they are helped by State or non-

governmental organisations. Thus, by 17-18 years of age, they are to be found in various city companies. The final objective is obviously to integrate them into society and to give them the possibility of providing for their own needs and (why not?) those of their families (this is to be considered in relation to the idea of independence of the child in a trafficking situation, mentioned in the “career” diagram).

It is important to stress that many of the things needed by the beneficiary families distributed by NPF (mattresses, beds, tables, doors, etc.) are produced by the children themselves in the practical vocational workshops. Thus there is a double advantage for the family (saving money and also pride in the children which make themselves “useful” to the family). This practice is also useful in raising awareness in the families, in order that they take good care of and maintain the items made by the child.

One day a week, they learn to cook. They are introduced to certain basic rules so that they have a balanced diet and know how to feed themselves. They prepare the food, lay the table and then sample their dishes. They will then be able to put this training into practice in their families. Indeed, as the parents have but a low level of education, they sometimes have cruel gaps even when it comes to the food they eat.

Similarly, once a week, various subjects are discussed such as the problems relating to adolescence, bringing up children, housekeeping and hygiene, subjects relating to society, health (drugs, alcohol, tobacco...), law, morals, etc. – both very theoretical or abstract topics and very practical topics such as daily home maintenance (being able to change a switch, for example). It is this kind of detail, which although it may appear unimportant, will help develop these children. These daily lessons, which are usually handed down from father to son or mother to daughter, must be revived. Their parents had no access to a minimum education and could not play their role as “teachers of everyday living”. The NPF teachers will relaunch this training. They are not teaching only these pupils, but they enable them subsequently to pass this knowledge on to their own children.

2.1.2. Prevention of indifference to school dropout

• Discussion and persuasion against illiteracy:

The parents of the communities concerned with school dropout and child trafficking have a real tradition of school non-attendance. Before the NPF and Terre des hommes intervention, there was a deep lack of interest in school and even in the children themselves and their fate. The director of the NPF even admitted that “*certain parents did not even know where the school was*”. Moreover, this disinterest extended to the whole community, the teachers, the authorities or the school principals... These children were totally abandoned. It is actually on the basis of this indifference that child trafficking has been able to develop. The first struggle was to combat this indifference. It seems that today, parents are more concerned by their children’s fate. The parents are becoming more involved in school life. They attend parent meetings. They justify their children’s absences from school. They attach more importance to school learning. This change did not occur overnight but required many discussions with the families and sometimes pressure.

The first stage was to give the family an immediate advantage if it sent its children to school. It is necessary to proceed beyond this stage. The motivation of the parents involved a short-term advantage. Immediate material aid can also sometimes be used as means of pressure. The condition for their receiving assistance is that they send the children to school. This is a very important, since it is reciprocity which is at stake. This help can lead to negotiations with the family. “Originally NPF granted assistance so that the child could go to school, today it is “school first, then assistance”¹³.

At same time, it is also necessary to make the parents understand that the advantages continue. Over the longer term, the children’s education will enable them to have a situation which will be better than that of their parents.

¹³ Robert Stratoberdha, Director of the NPF Foundation.

The parents have a tradition of not attending school, but the children can derive many advantages from schooling. They will benefit from it themselves, and that will also benefit their families. It is also necessary to make them understand that there is a double advantage: material (direct assistance for the family and for the child; money that the child's education will enable him or her to bring home later) and immaterial (the pride in seeing their child educated, with skills). Then there is also the prevention aspect that will be addressed during the discussions the case workers have with the family.

The idea that the child will bring the family more than just material benefits by going to school is to be emphasized in multiple activities in the presence of the parents. The children will also bring home information on many subjects and provide intellectual enrichment. They will especially give the family grounds for pride in their knowledge. They could also develop particular talents. The goal is to increase the children's abilities. The school will teach them new things that they will be able to take home to their families.

The process is not only to help the child or to help the family. The children should be helped to help their families. If they have already worked abroad or in the street in Albania, they will have learnt some skills as well as a certain pride. They feel that their mission is to help their families to survive by bringing money home, and so contributing to the family income. They should not necessarily be deprived of this role. They will have to develop their cognitive capacities, their skills and also their ability to produce (materially) within the limits of their age and the needs and rights as children. But of course, work must not be allowed to threaten or prevent the full realisation of the other rights of the child.

While Tdh and NPF do use the same argument as the trafficker, that of the immediate profit, the social workers can however put forward an additional argument, that of keeping their word.

Mutual trust is here of prime importance. The trafficker will not always keep his word of immediate profit and he cannot keep that of a longer-term benefit, whereas TdH and NPF can exploit this argument.

With regard to immediate assistance, Tdh teams know – and this is a golden rule – that they must always be sure that they can deliver on what they promise. It is best to find out about the possibilities before making proposals to the families. If not, the loss of trust is fatal to the assistance that can be provided for the child.

With regard to the longer-term assistance, the guarantee of a result is a harder promise to keep. Indeed, school is supposed to provide training and the acquisition of skills. That must then lead to a job which will make it possible to earn money. However, the situation in Albania does not allow this. There is a very high unemployment rate. Moreover, that is reinforced by the discrimination which exists in Albanian society with regard to certain communities (Roma and Jevgjit). If school does not make work any more accessible, one can understand the lack of motivation of parents and children alike. The NGOs have little control over macroeconomic elements such as mass unemployment on a national scale or (domestic, European or international) job-creation policies. The problem is that if school is no longer the means leading to employment, it loses its credibility. Thus, it becomes difficult to ensure that this argument of a long-term advantage, as advanced by NPF and TdH, remains reliable.

So two things have to be done. It should firstly be recalled that the profit may not be immediate but will cut in later. It is also necessary to have the people understand that the profit can be non-material (the education and pride which results). But it is also necessary to help them train in trades which will be adapted to the needs of the labour market. In practice, a combination is needed of school and training. The children will be able to learn trades which

will be directly useful to them later. NPF will also grant them a lump sum (in cash or tools) so that, at the end of their training, they will start their own activity.

The training offered will help the child reintegrate but will also be a means of propagating prevention. Thus, one activity can also be the means of performing another. Indeed, children who succeed can become examples, models to be followed by their juniors. They are the proof that trafficking is not inevitable and that it is possible to find alternate ways out of their distress.

Obviously, to further improve the action taken, it is advisable not to bury one's head in the sand. We must not overlook some of the undesired effects of the intervention. Families have tried "to take unfair advantage" of the direct material aid granted to them and made dependent upon their sending their child to school. Certain families which send their child to school anyhow will come to hear about this help granted by the organisations. So they will take their children out of school to be able to benefit from them by sending them back to school the following year. Here, it is not a question of knowing whether it is necessary or not to step up checks on the granting of this aid. In fact, these families also need material aid. The criteria of the material aid agreement are very general. After the file has been studied, the aid is granted on a case-by-case basis. Although the existence and legitimacy of the assistance should not be called into question in these cases, it is necessary simply to be aware that this can happen and that there can be adverse effects of any intervention. The main thing is to know whether the objective has been attained anyhow and that is that the children go to school and the families receive the aid they need. Thus the main thing is that the intervention bear its fruits all the same.

Making the families aware of the problem of trafficking is an essential objective. But this objective will lead to many forms of intervention at each stage. The crux of the daily work of the case workers lies in their direct contact with the family. Conversations with the parents and siblings of the recipients make it possible to glean information on how they perceive school, for example. The discussions can be directed towards the school results or the child's future opportunities, but also towards other subjects. The case workers can mention certain children who went to school, followed training and found work. These children can be used as role models for the others.

The way of discussing with the families is to make regular visits to their homes. This forms the daily work of both TdH workers and the NPF teachers. It is always necessary to approach these family visits with a precise objective in mind (for example, to find out why the child did not go to school...). It will be necessary to refer both to the teaching aspect and also to health and everyday life. The conversation can be directed towards school results, the child's future opportunities or even be centred on broader concepts relating to the everyday life of the family in general. It would seem that it is this kind of discussion and bond of trust, forged between the teams and the families, that lie at the origin of the good results noted. Regular attendance at school is reinforced. The children's behaviour towards their school peers or their parents changes. But especially their level of violence is much reduced.

- **Making the most of community traditions to counteract discrimination and a sense of inferiority:**

But sensitization must also take account of the culture of these communities. The teams of social workers should not condemn the traditions but try to make the most of them. The first stage is obviously to come to know the

traditions so that one can possibly have arguments in favour of school, even though, sometimes, the tradition is to marry off the girls very early and to take the children out of school early. One should not condemn but simply explain why these families have everything to gain by letting their children benefit from a school education.

It is important that the beneficiaries' parents do not feel in a position of inferiority. Indeed, when they come to face the trafficker, they must be able to feel on an equal footing to be able to question him on what will become of the child. They must not fall under the influence of the traffickers. In the same way, the parents must be worthy of respect in the eyes of their children. The fact of belonging to a community should not be disparaged, it must on the contrary be praised.

The TdH and NPF teams organise community activities such as “concerts”. There are shows put on by the beneficiaries and their siblings, but in which the whole community (parents, neighbours, etc.) can take part. This can be an opportunity for the parents to bring out the traditional costumes of their communities, to sing cultural songs or to share Roma poetry. This glorification of cultural traditions and languages will help improve the bond with the community. The traditions must be explained and understood as resources to be exploited. The adults can also share and teach the playing of a traditional instrument.

Moreover, this type of activity can offer a means of achieving another goal. Indeed, these playful activities can also be used to make the whole community aware of the problems of child trafficking. The shows can deal with topics concerning the traffic. The words of the songs can refer to school, street work and trafficking. The children can



also act out the story which was used for the prevention sessions in the schools (Dritan the robot¹⁴). This mixture between playing activities and prevention activities will reach two different audiences. The children, on the one hand, will adopt the prevention messages, and the adult audience, on the other, will in turn be sensitized.

Reactions are also varied. Often, the parents appreciate the work their children do. They see them in a new light. They sometimes discover gifts or skills of which they did not suspect the existence. The children's resources are thus revealed and highlighted. The children also go up in their parents' esteem. It is a question of having the parents recognise what the child is capable of. But sometimes the reactions can be more violent because of the subjects tackled. The problem is to know whether this type of activity really puts a message across or whether they stop thinking about it at the end of the activity. Apparently, the reactions are enthusiastic or violent (in this case the debates and the discussions blend) but the shows never leave the audience indifferent. It thus seems that, at that point, they begin to give the matter some real thought.

There are other activities that can involve the parents to make them admit that their child has learned much at school. Those which attend the practical vocational courses can present their work in front of their parents and even before the whole community. Incidentally, the NPF organised this. A fashion parade presented the work of a sewing class. In this way, the work itself is glorified.

- **Discrimination**

Another problem which partly causes school dropout among children in these communities is the discrimination to which they are subjected at school. It is not formal or institutionalised. It is not set down in laws or dictated by the State. It is rather a matter of daily discrimination at school. Although the NPF teachers avow that their work made it possible for them to change attitudes, it is not the same for all Albanian teachers. Certain school principals even refuse to register children from these communities in their schools.

Terre des hommes already carries out child trafficking sensitization work in schools. But the questions of discrimination and racism towards these communities seem insufficiently covered. They deserve more thorough attention.

- **The family/school standards conflict**

These two places are of the utmost importance in the everyday lives of children. In each of them, they develop their standards and values. Children are influenced by these elements. The discussions, the references and the limits imposed on them help them construct certain guidelines. The child is taught the principles of good and evil simultaneously in both places. However, at times, it happens that there is such a divergence between the standards of the two places that there is a true conflict. This conflict between the school and the parents themselves is not necessarily open and apparent but it can be latent. Even in this case, the child will be disturbed in his or her individual learning of the standards.

That there be a conflict of standards is normal and healthy. Contradiction is important in order that the children may make their own choices or reconcile the views and reach their own conclusions. But if there is too great a contradiction and an incompatibility between the standards of one place and the other, the children will find themselves in a delicate and extremely uncomfortable position. They will then have to choose one of two places and leave the other. This phenomenon can thus be at the origin of school dropout for certain children.

For example, because of the parents' tradition of not attending school, school can have a very negative connotation within the family. Sometimes, the parents never went to school or, if they did, they have very bad memories of it

¹⁴ Dritan (first name without any ethnic connotation) is the little hero of the comic strip on prevention created by TdH. He drops out of school, is recruited by a trafficker to beg in Greece and, after being caught by the police, returns home to his mother. He calls himself "Robot" because this is the actual name by which the street children call one another, as they compare their daily life to that of a machine (see the part on prevention campaigns in schools).

(discrimination, no good results, etc.). They can also react by rejecting school as a point of pride. School was useless for them so why should their children do any better? School is then not regarded as a stage of life and an important place.

The standard-setting conflict between school and home is important. With regard to how trafficking is perceived, there can be great differences between the approaches of these two places. Sometimes, trafficking – or work abroad for a third party (because the word “trafficking” is not used) – will be regarded as practically normal in the family whereas, at school, at the prevention sessions, the children are made to understand the dangers, the risks and the bad conditions of trafficking.

That brings us back to the question we raised in point 1.2: the disparity between the “legal” definition and the “social” definition of trafficking. There can be two ways of reacting in order to attenuate this conflict of standards between the family and school according to the importance of the principle concerned. On the one hand, it is possible to allow the family to be informed and to realise the facts. Their standards and principles may thus develop through direct discussions, prevention and sensitization. And on the other, they can be indirectly informed by their children who attended the prevention sessions. But then, it is also necessary that the intervention be adapted. Here again, it is necessary to know the standards and principles of the family and the community before actually intervening. According to that, it is sometimes necessary to know how to moderate and soften an approach. By too virulently judging current practices in a community, the bond of trust between the social workers and the beneficiaries can be broken. For example, the radical condemnation of any form of child labour would certainly be an error since the majority of children help their parents in their work or themselves have a small after-school job to help contribute a little money for the survival of the family.

So the principle is always to try to smooth out divergences so that the children do not find themselves at the centre of too violent a conflict of standards which would oblige them to leave school. The NPF and TdH workers must be mediators between family and school. That is also why one avoids using the label “traffic”. This word is much used by the media but is not necessarily adapted to intervention.

The ideal objective towards which we should work is family well-being. But with the means of an NGO, one can do little more than provide favourable conditions for this. TdH and NPF can only provide conditions which must lead to the beneficiaries taking their own fate in hand. They can simply make it possible for a family to actively seek and assume responsibility for its own well-being. Well-being depends on the family satisfying its own needs. The family, as the individual, has physical or material needs, and psychological needs (self-realisation, emotional needs, etc.). The organisations can facilitate that by providing economic aid accompanied by social assistance. But in the final analysis it is the family which will be able to reach a certain state of well-being if it takes itself in hand, if it manages to satisfy its needs by itself. This idea of independence goes a long way towards satisfying psychological needs by increasing self-esteem.

The intervention of the organisations is limited, and even then very indirectly, to acting on the will of the family to reinforce and develop its own abilities. It is, moreover, essential to recognise one’s limits as a social worker or else frustration arises, and this endangers especially the essential basis of trust in an assistance relationship: reciprocity.



2.2 First departure abroad

2.2.1. Redirecting curiosity towards positive stimulation

One of the motivations prompting the first departure abroad is curiosity. But contrary to what the proverb would have happen to the cat, curiosity is not a dangerous defect in a child. It is, on the contrary, an essential resource to allow his or her development, education and training in life. This positive resource is thus to be cultivated and not destroyed or condemned. But this curiosity will be focused abroad. In our case, on Greece. It will thus be necessary to channel and redirect this curiosity towards positive activities. Curiosity must be stimulated. That can be done by excursions, camps and activities centred on training. The summer camps organised by NPF and TdH can play this role. By introducing positive stimuli, we must make children discover the pleasure of learning new things. Their curiosity must be redirected from the unknown, from abroad, and their need for adventure must be turned to interests other than Greece. To do this, we have to start by managing to keep in touch with the children even at the end of the school year. For this purpose, the social workers gather the children at school three times a week until the beginning of the summer camps.

These camps have multiple objectives. First of all, it is a question of not leaving the children in the streets and of continuing to involve them in a school-related process. Educational and leisure activities are provided (reading, drawing, art, shows, sports activities, discussions, etc). They try to create attractive activities for the children. They focus their curiosity on the discovery of new places by means of excursions (to mountains, lakes, etc.). Sometimes the parents can take part in certain activities. These playing activities will form part of the social reintegration of the children. NPF is very involved in this task. Terre des hommes also avails itself of these camps to conduct prevention

work at the same time (by speaking to the children about trafficking) and especially detection work, by attracting other local children, friends, siblings, etc. Through the discussions, the children may disclose that they are in very difficult situations and could thus become children at risk of being trafficked. These new cases are recorded using the identification sheets and can later be followed up and helped.

2.2.2. Informing about working conditions and risks in Greece

The children will also be prevented from leaving by telling them about or having them realise the working conditions which await them in Greece. To do that, information must be transmitted. Networking is favoured for this task. Indeed, TdH and NPF will try to use all the possible methods of making contact, all the information distribution channels available. The goal is that every means should be tried to keep the children at school and to prevent the parents from yielding to the temptation of the easy money brought in by a child sent abroad. It is necessary that they understand that they have everything to gain from the child's remaining at school and not going abroad. It does not matter who is involved, the information must get across and reach the child so that he or she is no longer tempted to leave.

Indeed, when TdH or NPF first intervene, the public did not realise what child trafficking was all about because it was a new phenomenon when the borders opened up and in the following years. It is necessary to try to explain why, at that time, parents let their children leave without asking any questions, without knowing the work they were going to do, or under what conditions. Robert Stratoberdha, the Director of NPF, provides part of the answer. For years, the Communist regime had locked the country into a state of a total autarchy. No information filtered through from abroad. The public was fed unremitting propaganda and lies. To such a degree that the Government managed to make its people believe that Albania was one of the most advanced countries in Europe which everyone envied. This protection against the outside world was also coupled with paranoia such that the people had ended up by believing that all other countries wanted to attack Albania. This introspection, over the years, brutally changed when the borders were flung open. When they realised the permanent lie in which they had lived and the considerable development lag of their country, the Albanians virtually built a myth of life abroad, reinforced day-in day-out by the Greek and Italian television channels. This was exacerbated by a total ignorance of living conditions beyond the borders.

One can easily imagine that after the collapse of all their illusions and with them of all their points of reference, they needed something to grasp onto. And the people around them, their neighbours, family or friends, benefited from this need of trust. To doubt the word of a person close to one, is an insult to him, since that is tantamount to associating him with the great national historical lie.

The myth of what it was like abroad was also maintained by the first images of the reception of exiled Albanians in Italy. Television had shown that they each received a white dressing gown. This image had an enormous effect on their minds because most of the Albanians involved remember this dressing gown which became a symbol of the good reception given to Albanians who left their country to go abroad. But, this lie was also propagated by the children who returned or sent news. The traffickers threatened the children so that they did not recount the bad conditions and the bad treatment they had suffered. The frightened children then told only of the positive aspects of their experience abroad. The supposed good conditions and the advantages

*“The rumour which was put about was that to go abroad made one rich. People did not really know how. Then a true myth was born “Abroad, money was to be found everywhere, even on the ground”. They could not imagine that foreigners could have ill intentions. For them, abroad, they would inevitably have better conditions than in Albania. The idea was that foreigners are rich, that they can only do good. These communities exhibit a certain naivety. But it is also necessary to understand the trauma which the discovery of a permanent lie represents. Their everyday life was nothing but lies and propaganda”.*¹⁵

¹⁵ Robert Stratoberdha, Director of the NPF Foundation.

that the child exiled and working in Greece could represent were recounted to other families, which in turn were tempted to send a child to Greece. Whereas the untrue accounts of good conditions quickly spread within the community, the same was not true when the real conditions came to light. One can assume that the families were then subjected to pressure by the traffickers. But it may also be a question of a feeling of shame on the part of the parents who then preferred to hang onto the advantages while pretending not to know the facts.

It nevertheless remains that it is the lack of knowledge of the working conditions of the children abroad and also of life abroad in general which keeps child trafficking to Greece going. Let us recall that the peak of Albanian children-trafficking activity for illegal purposes in Greece was reached between 1996 and 1998, i.e. five years after the opening of the borders. One might expect that today, in 2004, after several years of trafficking-prevention campaigns, the families would know what awaits their children if they send them to Greece. It is true that many families now know what happens in Greece. Many families have been made aware of this problem. The children who return also find it easier to recount their experiences there.

But this awareness also has adverse effects. Previously, parents spoke openly of the fact that they had sent their child abroad since that was not seen in a negative but rather in a positive light (again the question of labelling). To have a person (even a child) working abroad meant to earn more money than by remaining in Albania. Now, during the first interview, it is difficult to make the parents admit they have a child in Greece (this corresponds to an internalisation of our labelling). They try to hide it and to say that he or she has gone to Tirana to visit relatives. This is interesting since it is the intervention which has created this change in behaviour. The fact that they hide it shows that they have understood that it is illegal and not really very good for the family image.



However, certain families are still ignorant of the phenomenon of trafficking and the children are still entrusted without question. If the trafficker reassures the family by saying that all is going well, the technique to make the parents realise that their child is being exploited consists in planting doubts about the child's situation (strategic parallelism). These families have to be approached with subtle arguments. The social workers start by saying that they do not know about their child but they explain that cases like that do exist. They give details of how the recruitment and work usually occur. This gives the families food for thought on the similarity of their situation with that described. They plant doubts in the parents' minds so that sometimes they themselves contact the case workers to have their child brought back.

It is always important to make the children aware. The child will be attracted by the descriptions given by the trafficker or the fact of being able to help his or her family to live by sending back money. Being able to work like an adult often enhances the image of a child in the eyes of other children. So the children also have to be aware of what can happen to them if they go off to work in Greece.

- **Prevention campaigns in schools**

For this purpose, awareness campaigns have been set up in schools. They are aimed at two types of audience: pupils and teachers. These meetings are called "projection-debates". There have so far been two successive prevention sessions.



The first session involved the viewing of a videocassette of accounts by children who had been trafficked, followed by a discussion of child trafficking. For the children, it involved a comic strip telling the story of Dritan the “robot”. That is what the children who work in Greece actually call one another. For the teachers, there was a brochure explaining what trafficking really is and the reasons, the dangers and the first signs of it.

These prevention sessions have multiple objectives.

For the children:

- These sessions make it possible to inform the children of the dangers of the street, of exile and of the working conditions. The children were asked whether they would leave with a foreigner (or somebody whom they only slightly knew) if he offered them money and other good things. And they were especially asked if so, why? Of the unsensitized pupils, 50 % answered that they would, in the hope that they would receive “pretty” things, have fun and travel. Many of them believe that if they leave, it is for their own good, for a better life. They have many illusions and apparently have no idea of the conditions which await them if they leave.

The children who attended the prevention sessions will give different reasons. The recurring explanation (60 %) is that of the almost vital need for money for themselves and their families. It is need that drives them, for want of choice. Prevention makes the children more aware of the risks that they incur if they leave.

Only need can oblige them to leave. They will thus have more arguments to oppose a trafficker who tries to deceive them. Their refusal will be more strongly motivated and the child will less easily fall into the trap of promises of easy money and a better life.

- Another objective of prevention is to improve understanding of what happens to children who are victims of this traffic. Unsensitized children (34 %) initially think that the reason for the absence of some their comrades is the fact that they do not like school. Whereas for the sensitized pupils (30 %), the reason which is most often given is that they are obliged to work because their parents are poor. Their perception of their comrades' absence is closer to reality thanks to prevention programs. That is extremely important for the way they will welcome back the children who return from Greece after having been trafficked. Their return to school will be facilitated if the other children do not reject them but, on the contrary, are aware of what happened to them. So prevention has its role to play in preparing the other children for the return to school and social rehabilitation of the trafficked children.

For the teachers:

- The prevention sessions first of all help clarify information concerning child trafficking, and define criteria to detect it. It was noticed that, before prevention, everyone seemed to know what trafficking was. But the majority of unsensitized teachers (32 %) answered that it was organ trafficking but that is not the most current child trafficking activity. The idea of illegal activities like theft or begging appear only afterwards. However, according to the information collected from the identification sheets, begging is the most widespread activity (39 %), then comes work (27 %) such as, for example, washing cars, while prostitution comes much lower down the scale (1 %). Even though certain activities are more easily revealed and confided by the children than others, it is nonetheless illegal activities and exploitation through work which dominate. This misinformation can be put down to the media which transform reality by focusing attention on certain more extreme types of trafficking while forgetting the less spectacular, which can also be traumatic. But these answers can also indicate indifference towards the Roma or Jevgjit people. Prevention will initially aim to restore the truth on child trafficking and to show that the child labour and the illegal activities which result from it are not trivial.

The most widespread answer among the teachers who followed the prevention sessions will be “illegal activities”. Prevention can be seen to have played its role. Identifying these activities as traffic pure-and-simple means that it is no longer possible to minimise their importance.

- Another aim of prevention is to break down the indifference surrounding this phenomenon in general. The teachers must become more committed to the detection of trafficked children. In addition, the teachers must be made to understand that they have a social role to play (to react, to respond to the children, etc.). It is encouraging to see that prevention involves a reduction in teacher discouragement, a sort of apparent re-motivation (as expressed through the answers to the questionnaire). But it is always difficult to know whether that will affect their behaviour.

But although the teachers are aware that they must discuss the dangers of trafficking with the children and their parents, they seem to have more of a problem detecting whether a child is at risk of being trafficked. The teachers can have doubts about their own detection capabilities. But there is another explanation. The teachers are not very well off. Indeed, their very low wages often oblige them to take another parallel job. One could see these answers as a refusal to become too involved in activities which, according to them, really do not fall to them but should rather depend on the social services or the appropriate State structures.

Another way of involving the teaching staff in the prevention campaigns is to set up mini-partnerships between the teams of social workers and the school. Each school establishment has its own teaching project which, during the year, includes external activities (excursions, competitions, etc.). Unfortunately, these activities are often cancelled because of lack of funds. After negotiation with senior TdH or NPF staff, these activities can be conducted thanks



to small contributions which never exceed 25,000 Leke.¹⁶ This type of partnership, which caters to certain professional obligations, is often used to trigger the involvement of teachers in other prevention activities.

A second prevention session was set up after the Tdh teams had been trained in new group leadership techniques by the Terre des hommes Youth Service. This training was to help the social workers to lay the bases of a teaching system combining a systemic approach, participative methods and related techniques. The activity must be prepared so that the pupils find out (knowledge), imagine (intuition), have hands-on experience

(practical) and feel (sensitivity). The method must be adapted to these objectives. It must be rational (using analysis and reflection), intuitive (visualization, imagination), organised (method, order) and relational (sensitivity, human contact).

A method based on these principles has been used in the schools. The aim is that the pupil should be able to understand the mechanisms of child trafficking (causes, conditions, consequences), to visualize the various stages and to reflect on the relations between the parties involved in the trafficking. The facilitators begin by sticking prices on the pieces of furniture but also on some children. They then ask them to describe what they felt. They make them think about their reactions and question them on the connection with child trafficking. They review with them what they saw in the first prevention session concerning the rights of the child. Then the children are broken down into small groups and each has drawings and labels which together will form the story of Aferdita, a small girl who is a victim of trafficking. The children must recreate the story by organising the drawings chronologically. Then they must find which label forms the caption for each drawing. When the children find the caption they then read it in front of the whole class. The children take to this participation very well. They are proud, are made to feel good about coming to read in front of the others. Group working enables them to share their reactions or even, for those who have been through trafficking, their experiences. Once the story has been recompiled, the end is missing. A child will come up and draw the end of the story. Mostly, in the endings imagined by the children, Aferdita finds her mother and all her family.

- **Other means of transmitting information: “Child-to-child”**

Information must circulate on the working conditions in Greece and the dangers of leaving home, regardless of the channels or the participants in this transfer. We have referred to the prevention sessions in schools. We have also seen that the concerts organised by TdH and NPF could also be a means of passing information directly on to the community as a whole. But this can also take the form of a discussion between one child and another. For example, at the summer camps, children considered as being highly at risk of going abroad are identified. The group leaders will encourage a discussion between one such child and another who has had already left and returned and has been taken into the NPF or TdH follow-up and assistance programme or directly into that of the school. This returnee will be able to tell the other child of the travel and working conditions. By explaining to the other child what his or her own experiences, this child's story will have a much greater impact than if it had been simply recounted. Let us also recall that economic assistance can be essential in certain families to prevent the child leaving for the first time, as well as subsequent departures.

¹⁶ i.e. 185 Euro, 275 CHF, 240 USD.

2.3. Return to Albania

There are many reasons why a child returns to Albania of his or her own accord. They can be grouped under three principal headings as defined by Riccardo Lucchini in his work on street children.¹⁷

Coercion

The first method of return can be that of coercion, and this is conducted by the police. The child is then taken by the Greek authorities to the Albanian border, where he or she should be taken care of.¹⁸



Lack of resources

It may be that the children realise the trickery of the trafficker. Or else they can be disappointed, either by the income that work can pay (because the trafficker takes the money for himself and does not send any to the family), or by the degree to which they are maltreated. This maltreatment may be physical or psychological. It should be stressed that the concept of maltreatment does not have the same cultural definition in France, Albania or Greece. It is not unusual in Albania for a child to be physically pushed around every day. It is even, at a pinch, something between education and maltreatment. Sometimes the children know no other type of treatment from their parents and guardians. This fact then reinforces the impact of the maltreatment announced by the children. That means that if the child speaks about maltreatment, it means that there was a very high degree of violence. Much of what we call maltreatment thus remains latent. The street teams in Greece often find the child physically and morally exhausted, a condition exacerbated by years of street work in the cold, exposed to the indifference of passers-by. The lack of resources also relates to cases where time ends up making certain forms of behaviour inadequate. This is the case, for example, when children become too old to beg. At that point, they either return or they move on to other more dangerous activities (as a rule, the boys join organised crime networks, and the girls go into sexual exploitation rings).

The “active” return

The voluntary abandonment of trafficking, similar to what R. Lucchini calls the “active return” from the street, can occur through a relationship with a reference person. The children meet someone (say, a social worker) who can become a reference for them. They will want to please that person who does not accept trafficking, and will then actively work out their motivation to leave this situation. This is the “active return”. This identification with the social worker and the even partial adoption of the worker’s values can be necessary to start the return process, but another reason for the return of the children can simply be the fact that they miss their families. The children then choose to return of their own accord.

It is the “active” return which offers the greatest chance of seeing the children reintegrated, because they themselves work out a strong motivation guaranteeing greater stability than the two other methods. This, then, generates another action principle:

It is a question of making it possible for the children to widen their cognitive and normative references, their capacity to consider their situation with a critical eye, and thus to acquire the ability and motivation actively to seek a better situation. That is essential in rehabilitation, but it is also a strong preventive principle.

¹⁷ Riccardo Lucchini: “Career, identity and leaving the streets – the case of the street child”, *Deviance et Société*, 2001, vol. 25, No 1, pp. 75-97.

¹⁸ At the time of writing this document, very few good practices exist concerning the voluntary assisted return of Albanian children from Greece to Albania. The Greek police deportation services maintain their systematic deportation system of minors over twelve years of age at the border, and what is more, together with adults. See: “Trafficking of Albanian children in Greece”, Tdh, January 2003.

The first stage after the return of the child consists in evaluating the children's medical condition and their ability to extricate themselves from the relationships created during the exploitation. The following stage is to send them back to school. A reintegration report on the child is prepared merely for informative purposes. The specific Terre des hommes identification sheet, which is different, aims at detecting possible behavioural disorders. NPF then plays a reporting role and works with a doctor who will be able to look further into the diagnosis.

In all cases of return, the assistance provided aims at reinstating the child in his or her family. The preparation of the family for the return of the child is followed by a daily visit to the family and a quarterly report on its progress. That ensures a follow-up of the child during the stages of social rehabilitation. If it is not possible to reinstate the child in his or her biological family then, according to Albanian traditions, it is the broader family (grandparents, uncles, aunts, cousins) who will care for the child. If these two solutions are impossible, a foster family is sought.

In all cases, it will be necessary to avoid the victimisation of the child at school or in the community. The quality of the child's return will very strongly condition his or her reintegration.

2.4. Second departure and subsequent departures

The reasons for subsequent departures will not be the same as those for the first departure. Indeed, during their first stay abroad, the children acquired certain abilities and knowledge. It is no longer curiosity that drives them. Moreover, they know the working conditions. One may firstly wonder what explains the fact that those who have already been maltreated can return to Greece. Actually, this is a different stage. The children will want to be independent. They will want to work for themselves, and will be tempted to live their own adventures.

With respect to the family:

Children can be confronted with situations of conflict within the family, whether they are the focus of such conflict or not. They will sometimes prefer to leave since they do not see their place with their families in Albania.

This is an escape to a place they now know and which they have tamed despite the maltreatment, lack of food, hygiene, shelter and so forth. It is not easy to counter such escapes; it is not a simple matter since it concerns the family structure itself. It is, however, possible to try to organise activities together with the parents and the children. Showing both sides in their best light can lead to each of them recognising the positive aspects of the other. The involvement of the parents will be of primary importance in trying to rekindle a spark of affection between parents and children, to recreate a complicity by conducting activities in common. The social workers will also be able to emphasize filial love.

“If they know the conditions awaiting them, they will not set out again unless they see no alternative in their country, whether it concerns their families or their work opportunities”.

With respect to job opportunities:

The lack of job prospects in Albania is one reason why children who have already been trafficked set out again. It is thus necessary to discuss vocational training. We have mentioned this before - training in a trade coupled with education in the basic concepts that need to be known on leaving school already offers solutions. There is much unemployment in Albania, but actually very few people have qualifications. There are very few skilled workers but they will be able to find work. During training, the child must acquire a qualification which must be recognised by an employer (and which must gradually be remunerated). These skills must then be recognised by a buyers' market.

NPF supports children by giving them tool kits at the end of their vocational training. It is also possible to give them a little capital to begin an activity. When they leave, they must have all the chances on their side. Sometimes they find work. If they do not find any in the trade they were trained in, they can sometimes find some in another trade. The important thing is to have given them a taste for work, a desire to work. That will enable them to pull out of their fatalistic attitude and take their fate in their own hands by breaking away from the context of assistance.

HOW to intervene?

Intervention based on trust

How to change a phenomenon depends on the nature of that phenomenon.

3.1. Trust – the crux of the analysis

As we saw in point 1.2., trust is a central element in understanding the social dynamics of the “child trafficking” phenomenon. In light of our hypothesis, we were able to launch a discussion in the workshop on the question of the conditions necessary to trust somebody. This question greatly stimulated participation and brought out a large number of conditions considered essential for trust. Firstly, it is interesting to note that this general question immediately elicited answers based on the relationship between the social workers and the children or their families. The case workers were perfectly aware that the assistance they offer these children is inseparable from a relationship favourable to trust. They cannot become privy to a family’s secrets without having first won its trust. Much of the effectiveness of their work depends on this precondition. This is why, when a relationship of trust is discussed, they immediately think of that which they constantly maintain with the beneficiaries of assistance.

[Sincerity, complicity, proximity]

3.1.1 Conditions for a trusting relationship

The first element of trust is sincerity. Always telling the truth is a golden rule. That goes hand-in-hand with the fact of offering the children realistic prospects. There is no question of promising them money, work, or a better situation if the organisation is not in a position to offer this future.

“Never make a precise promise if you are not 100 % sure of being able to keep it .”

Only someone able to keep his word will be trusted. That is essential in the work of Terre des hommes and NPF. It is true that the teams recommend to the parents that they send their children to school. They argue that they will thus benefit from the knowledge they acquire. The school usually aims to provide an education which will make it possible to subsequently find a job. But unemployment is rife throughout Albania and the Roma and Jevgjit communities which suffer a certain amount of discrimination do not have the same chances as the others. There is thus a danger for the credibility of Terre des hommes and NPF if the solutions which they propose cannot produce the results they promised. Training in a trade adapted to the labour market may be an answer, but it is necessary to find answers in all cases and not to let the children and their families believe that they were lied to on the usefulness of schooling. They should, above all, not feel that they have been duped. The expectations to which the organisations give rise must be satisfied or else the relationship of trust will be broken and the possibility of helping the children to escape the trafficking lost.

The case workers also stressed the value of the principle of secrecy. They are themselves entrusted with children's secrets. These are not always easy to bear and especially to share with another person. These secrets may be family secrets or those of the child itself. They may talk of what they experienced during their trip abroad; the maltreatment, the abuses, the humiliations. This kind of secret calls for complicity. Sometimes they have not even told their parents about it. They must find an attentive and confidential ear in the case workers. It is delicate to play this role when working with the anti-trafficking police, which is necessary in the best interests of the child (Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child) even if it is likely to impinge on the trust which the parents place in the social or educational workers.

This principle brings us right back to that of proximity. There is, on the one hand, geographical proximity, belonging to the same country, the same national past of oppression, the same city, and sometimes the same district. But there is another, different sort of proximity, that of friendship, of complicity, which is the result of long discussions and much time spent on them or on finding solutions to various problems.

It is crucial, to start and to build this relationship, to open up a little to the child: "If you do not open up yourself, the child will not confide in you", said a case worker. This brings us right back to the question of reciprocity. For the child to tell his or her story, it is also necessary to tell a little of one's own. That makes it possible for the child to identify the other person not just as the person who questions him or her on trafficking but also as a person who likes this or that. The children have more information and can thus place their conversation partners in a world other than that of trafficking. It is necessary to learn the details, however insignificant, of a person before confiding in him.

In order that the child open up and trust, the case worker has to open up in turn and share herself a little. That obviously does not mean that she should speak of indiscreet things concerning her personal life but simply that she give the child some reference points – banal information on her preferences can make her more credible in her approach to the child. That is essential for a relationship of trust which must be a two-way affair.

[Understand, appreciate, respect]

The children or the parents will entrust secrets provided they are not judged in return. It is not the job of the case workers "to moralise" or arbitrarily condemn certain forms of behaviour. They must above all try to understand and explain what can harm the child. It would be wrong to stigmatise traditions or family intrigues as this is contrary to highlighting the positive aspects of the traditions and abilities of both the child and the parents.

Finally, one last principle emerged in the discussions on the conditions for trust, and that was respect. But this respect has several possible sources. A distinction must in particular be made between respect for a person and respect for a status. In the former case, the choice to trust is due to the qualities, the behaviour or the values of the person. In the latter case, there will not inevitably be trust if the respect is forced by a status.

In the case of the relationship between the child and the case workers or the NPF teachers, each party has noted the personality, the values and the behaviour of the other. The relationship is based on all of the above-mentioned conditions. It is thus healthy and reciprocal. That leads to respect for the person and not for the status. Trust and respect cannot be forced, but are conditioned by rules to which both can subscribe.

3.1.2. Mediation before trafficking

Before studying the nature of the relationship between the trafficker and the child or the family, it is necessary to consider the methods of making contact. It is thus necessary to study the actual mediation between the parties concerned. It is known that in the majority of cases, it is the trafficker who will contact the families. But the opposite situation exists, too.

The family may be prompted by a person close to it who will advise it to send its child abroad to remedy the desperate situation that it is in. This person will indicate an acquaintance able to arrange that. It may be what one could call a “pickup”. This intermediary may be guilty of trafficking but could also be acting in good faith and not know the working conditions awaiting the children abroad.



Sometimes, this intermediary has also sent his children abroad with the same trafficker. Then there is one more case that sometimes arises in which the child contacts the trafficker directly. That occurs only for the second, third or following departures, when the child has become adept at working abroad and wants, in turn, to exploit it more independently. Here, we see that the concept of career (see above) makes it possible to understand the rationale of this act (to put oneself in the hands of a trafficker) which otherwise would be regarded as devoid of reason or “choice” on the child’s part.

But this direct contact between the trafficker and the child is more unusual and rarely occurs for the first departure. So in general, the family will play the role of a “filter” between the trafficker and the child. While we must work on the children so that they refuse to be trafficked, it is also of primary importance that we approach the parents as well. Albanian society still functions very much in a patriarchal way. The children do not have a wide margin of manoeuvre and do not take much part in decision-taking. It is thus necessary to widen the field of prevention to also take in the parents. And this brings us back to the fact that the organisations that wish to help these children must win the trust of both the beneficiaries and their families.

3.1.3. The trafficker-child or trafficker-family relationship.

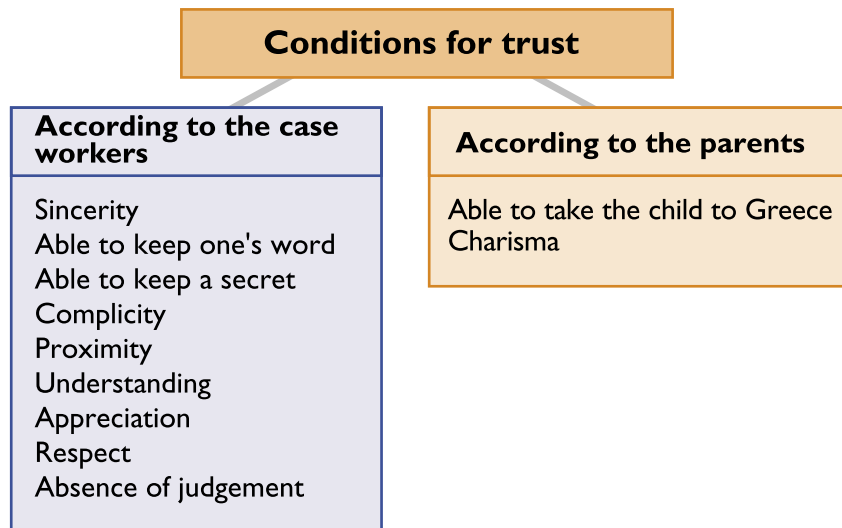
The relation between the trafficker and the child or the family is very different from that maintained by the case workers. Respect is in general not shown for the person but rather for the person’s status and the relationship is, in fact, one of power. The question is knowing where his power comes from. Does he have some physical, psychological or financial means of exerting pressure on the family?

It seems that the first source of power is the possibility of taking the child to Greece. This simple instrumental ability confers a certain status on the trafficker in the community. So he will be the person to approach. It is not, initially, a question of financial clout since the trafficking of children does not require any cash investment on their part.

Whether the trafficker takes the child or not will depend only on whether he is prepared to run the risk. He may simply have shown that he is smart or bold. The trafficker may be known in the community for these qualities and thus, he is able to take the child - he will not be afraid of running the risk of being checked by the police. The case workers must also point out that the trafficker may have a certain charisma and be able to convince the parents to entrust their child to him.

It thus seems that the only conditions required by the family are that the trafficker should have the physical capacity to take their child to Greece and a certain charisma. So they will come to trust him very fast and practically without asking any questions. It is almost unconditional.

If we now compare the conditions the case workers require for trusting someone and the conditions really required by the parents to trust the person who comes to recruit their child, we note a remarkable difference:



There is thus a very great imbalance between these two views of trusting relationships. That which is maintained with the children by the social workers is conditioned by many elements, it is equitable, reciprocal and healthy. Whereas that imposed between the trafficker and the family or the child subsequently is completely unbalanced. It demands total trust to take the child and the family has virtually no right to ask any questions about the child's future conditions. The strangest thing is that the family places its trust in such a manner. That may have historical origins as we saw previously but it might also be a question of the pressure that the trafficker exerts on the family.

3.1.4. The debtor-creditor relationship

There is a mechanism that virtually obliges the parents to trust the trafficker and entrust him with their child. The parents are already living in an inferior position to the trafficker. Moreover, it should be noted that the debtor-creditor relationship is very strong in Albania.

However, this concept must be related to the code of honour which still strongly marks many

This is what very often completely distorts the relationship between the parents and the trafficker, who may make a gift to the family such as paying the rent or giving them money, satellite TV, food, clothing, etc. He thus makes the parents indebted to him. They will then owe him.

mentalities. This is the moment from which the power relationship starts. The trafficker has the advantage and can then ask a great deal of the parents without risking any resistance from them. That explains why the parents do not generally ask any questions about the living conditions of the children they send to Greece.

The solution would be for the parents to refuse these first gifts. But it should be understood that these families are in such desperate situations that it is difficult for them to say “no” to so providential a handout. The question is to know how to elicit this first refusal before the dependence sets in.

First of all, the parents must be warned of the dangers of this first gift. They generally know that they will be indebted but they do not always know how they will have “to pay”. Prevention will play this role. But beyond this approach, there are other ways of helping them to refuse. Some refuse already and the criterion which guides them is dignity. The concept of dignity, which makes each human being unique and not comparable to a commodity, is also strongly bound up with the tradition of honour. Thus, intervention runs counter to tradition but will, on the contrary, glorify it in order to restore the requirement of reciprocity in the relationship of trust.

The dignity of the whole family will depend on many conditions. These may be the economic conditions, a stable economic and social situation. The families are helped by Terre des hommes and NPF to meet this first requirement by means of material aid. According to the case workers, another fact that can restore the dignity of a family is also its being accepted by the community, its having a decent level of studies and its having alternative ways to develop. The organisation must intervene at all these levels. Through schooling and training, the children can improve their future conditions and make the most of their own skills. But the intervention must also be centred on the rest of the family. The parents must be made to feel good. While there are many ways of making the parents feel good, the first method is obviously to treat them with respect - respect for the individual, obviously, and not for the status of victim or unemployed person...

By thus treating the parents, it will be possible to restore their self-esteem, bruised by the conditions of distress and sometimes of powerlessness in the face of poverty. They will regain their dignity and will thus be able to refuse the gifts in the knowledge that they will spell disaster for the family. They will be able to obtain assistance from Terre des hommes and NPF to support them, on condition that the children go to school. That is a reciprocal requirement, one of the underlying principles of trust.

The assistance makes the families indebted only in their own interest: the price to be paid is that they immediately, or in any case partially, give up the income brought in by the children in exchange, for longer-term profit by sending them to school. That is why the immediate lack of income must be offset by material aid.

This help is an essential means of leading the families to be able to restore the requirements of reciprocity. In order to lead these families to be able to refuse the pressure (gifts) and to put themselves back on an equal footing with the traffickers, it is



necessary to start by establishing a relationship with them based on reciprocity. It is the reciprocity which is a pledge of self-respect and respect for others, and the starting point of dignity. It is a question of helping the families to find their dignity by inducing them to feel entitled to demand reciprocity. The project must thus clearly show the rules of reciprocity. If a commitment is entered into, the other party is entitled to expect performance of what was agreed upon. The respect of this principle can lead to power relationships between the organisations and the families. If it is occasionally necessary to exert pressure on the family so that it continues to send the child to school, that is legitimate since it is on the assertion of the principle of reciprocity that the new-found or regained confidence of the families depends in their dealings with the traffickers. It is this increase in self-confidence and resistance to abuse that is referred to as empowerment.

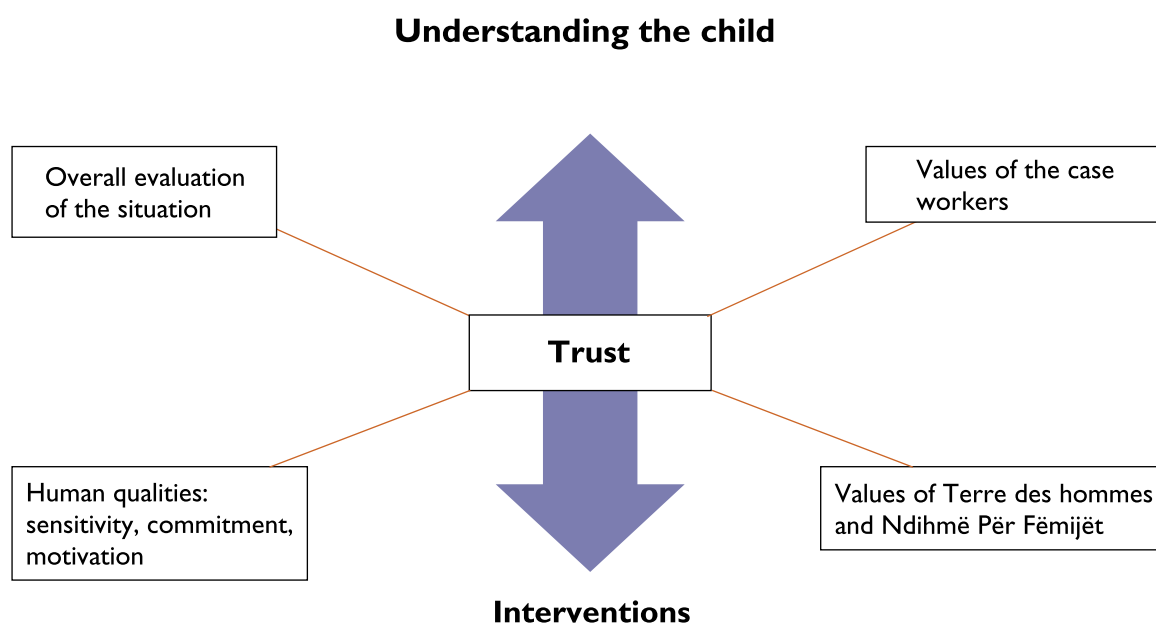
The principle of the relationship of reciprocity between the case workers and the beneficiaries is what determines the effectiveness of the intervention. Without reciprocity, there is no real commitment and no trust.

Mutual trust is indeed the very basis for the success of intervention and we have seen how the various components of trust are activated at the various stages of intervention (see part 2).



3.2. Intervention: a matter of trust

Understanding the child will help find solutions adapted to his or her needs and resources. Intervention should develop the child's capacities. But it is of primary importance to understand the transition between these two stages. A "philosophical" approach, a global vision and a well-developed sensitivity on the part of the case workers will help in this. The individual values of each case worker, her motivation and her commitment to the project will also be taken into account in realising the objectives of the mission. One might also imagine that the values attached to the "Terre des hommes" organisation and to the Ndihmë Për Fëmijët foundation are also used as references. All these elements will condition the quality of the approach, without which it would be impossible or simply ineffective to intervene. Indeed, it is thanks to this that trusting relationships can be established. This sometimes fragile trust conditions the effectiveness of the action taken.



The way trafficking is understood will completely condition the effectiveness of the project. This in fact relates to the relationships both between the social workers and the direct and indirect beneficiaries, and also between the various organisations and institutions involved. The activities jointly conducted by Terre des hommes and NPF seem to comprise a number of positive parameters. The first parameters relate to the social workers – their age, their training, their commitment to networking and their mode of organisation. All that conditions the relationship that these case workers maintain with the children and their families. Trust plays a crucial role.

3.2.1. The case workers

The generation issue is decisive in all countries in transition but particularly in Albania. Indeed, the country has undergone an incredible and especially brutal political, institutional and social upheaval. Moreover, the radical transformation of society is still very recent. Mentalities are still strongly marked by the "Former Regime". The history of this country is still very much alive in the minds of its inhabitants. For the case workers, their perception and the general understanding of the phenomenon will vary according to whether they knew or did not know the Former Regime.

- **Tdh and the younger generation**

It seems that the youth of the Terre des hommes community case workers constitutes not an obstacle but rather an advantage. The generations having lived under the Former Regime were in many cases much influenced by the values of that period, in particular by a certain fatalism. The young people are not marked by that since they lived under the Former Regime for only a very few years before the transition.

Their youth also allows for a better adaptation to Tdh principles and the values of the organisation. They have not yet been touched by the prejudices which abound in the Albanian administrative institutions concerning the Roma and Jevgjit communities. They will be able more easily to adopt the Terre des Hommes approach. The Tdh Head of Mission thus opted to recruit young personnel. That, moreover, has the merit of training young Albanians and offering them greater opportunities for their future. However, a certain instability is to be noted among the community case workers. Indeed, the rapid team turnover is striking. That is because they are girls of marrying age and many leave to go abroad. This is a problem not only for the mission but for the country as a whole. Albania suffers from a drain of all the people who reach a high level of studies. The majority of people who rise socially and who have the will to work also have the ambition to leave the country. Very few want to remain in their country where they do not think they will find any job opportunities commensurate with their abilities, jobs of responsibility still being very hard to enter.

And then there is a certain paradox in that the teams which try to convince the children and families that it is not necessary to send their children abroad are themselves thinking of getting out as soon as they have a chance to do so. But this paradox is inevitable as long as the situation of Albania has not improved and the country does not offer more opportunities to people with ambition and who want to progress in society.

- **NPF: Progress towards individual values**

NPF made a very different choice in relation to the activities of the organisation. The NPF teachers are in fact older than the TdH case workers but they themselves testify to the change in mentality that their work is bringing about. They have changed their approach. Previously, the sight of the Jevgjit or Roma children begging in the street in Greece or Albania awoke in them a feeling of mistrust, a rejection which could even go as far as a certain racism towards these communities. They also tended to blame fate. Fatalism was indeed a very important aspect of Albanian culture under the Former Regime and it still lingers on. But, they needed to make some personal progress. This made them react differently. It was their knowledge of the trafficking phenomenon that enabled them to make this change. This sudden awareness also lies at the origin of their desire to become involved. They felt concerned by this problem, by the situation of these children. They are aware that all Albanians, and in particular teachers, have not yet undergone this change and that it is this attitude of denigration and lack of interest which can provide conditions favourable to trafficking.

This progress was necessary for them. The case workers themselves must be convinced of the justification, utility and effectiveness of their activities. As they themselves say, "We can identify with an organisation if there is a common vision". However they had to drop the fatalistic views to which they were accustomed in order to be able to question their own involvement (what can I do?). At that point, it is necessary that the values of the Terre des hommes or NPF organisation coincide with the individual values of the case workers. Once the two visions match, the work can be effective.

3.2.2. The balance of the teams and skills

The training, skills and predispositions of each social worker will also be taken into account for making up the teams. In the case of the TdH community workers, balance is established according to the tasks to be realised. Of the four social workers in Elbasan, for example, two are trained teachers. They will tend to deal rather with prevention and awareness training in the schools. The other two have a different training and skills more directed towards social

work. They will be called upon in particular to visit families. But it is understood that this organisation is not rigid and that each member takes part in all stages.

But each post calls for particular skills and qualities. The co-ordinators have a general knowledge of the trafficking situation and can cope with the complexity of the operational response which developed as experience was gathered. Although that is irreplaceable, it is not inexhaustible. This means that the information that they have must be passed on. They must constantly delegate responsibilities so that others may be continuously trained and permitted to learn ever more about the phenomenon and methods of intervention. That does not mean that, in particularly delicate situations, they do not come into direct contact with the family in order to back up the work done by the case workers. This sort of opportunity enables them to always remain in contact with the grass roots and not to lose touch with reality in their management and co-ordination work.



3.2.3. Commitment and participation

“It is not when one leaves work that one stops”. This remark by an NPF teacher summarises well in itself all the involvement required. The fact that the beneficiaries and the case workers live cheek-by-jowl makes the involvement even stronger. One can speak about geographical proximity. Indeed, they rub shoulders with the children they come to help every day – the children who work selling plastic bags in the market and who are most of the time the children most at risk of being trafficked.

The co-ordinators are known in the communities and the districts where they work. They are constantly duty-bound to represent the organisation. Their personal lives are often not easily separated from their working lives. Burnout and fatigue are the inevitable consequences. But this involvement and this rhythm of work (weekends are sometimes curtailed or cancelled) bear witness to the commitment of the co-ordinators to this project. They were involved in the genesis and the progressive development of each activity. They have been working for two-and-a-half years on this project which started practically from scratch. They are today seeing the first results, a recognition of their work. They have put so much into this mission that they would not like it to stop or collapse. All the energy they have put into it means that they have a perfect mastery of the history and organisation of the project. The feeling of having made progress since the beginning of the project is encouraging. That is, furthermore, why it is so important to capitalise on experience and make the most of it. As commitment derives from having been present at the development of the project, it seems difficult to pass that on to a person who joins the team along the way. However, it is necessary to continue the activities with the same motivation if they are to be effective. It is thus possible to find a replacement.

The case workers must be involved in the development of the project. It is highly recommended that everyone participate because, even though the project is already off the ground, it is not immutable and complete. It still needs motivated people to develop it who will in their turn enrich it.

For TdH in Albania, this desire to involve all case workers is very strong. That has resulted in the design and the realisation of questionnaires for the evaluation of in-school prevention sessions by the case workers themselves. On this first occasion, the participation proved enriching at several levels. First of all, their experience with the children

provided more content for the questionnaires when filling them out. Then, that experience also facilitated the administration of the questionnaires. Lastly, the analysis could not have been conducted without their contributions during the interpretation. That was made possible thanks to the motivation and availability of the case workers. It is also such participation which will renew this same motivation, for example, to contribute actively to the adaptation of the new prevention kits.

3.2.4. Networking

The child-trafficking phenomenon is created by an organised network. It knows no geographical limits and no legal constraints.¹⁹

This realisation exposes a fundamental principle for action. The fight against child trafficking must use the same means: co-ordination of activities, the establishment of a network and transnational activities. This is what one can call the “strategic parallelism” principle. It is a question of speed, and thus of means.

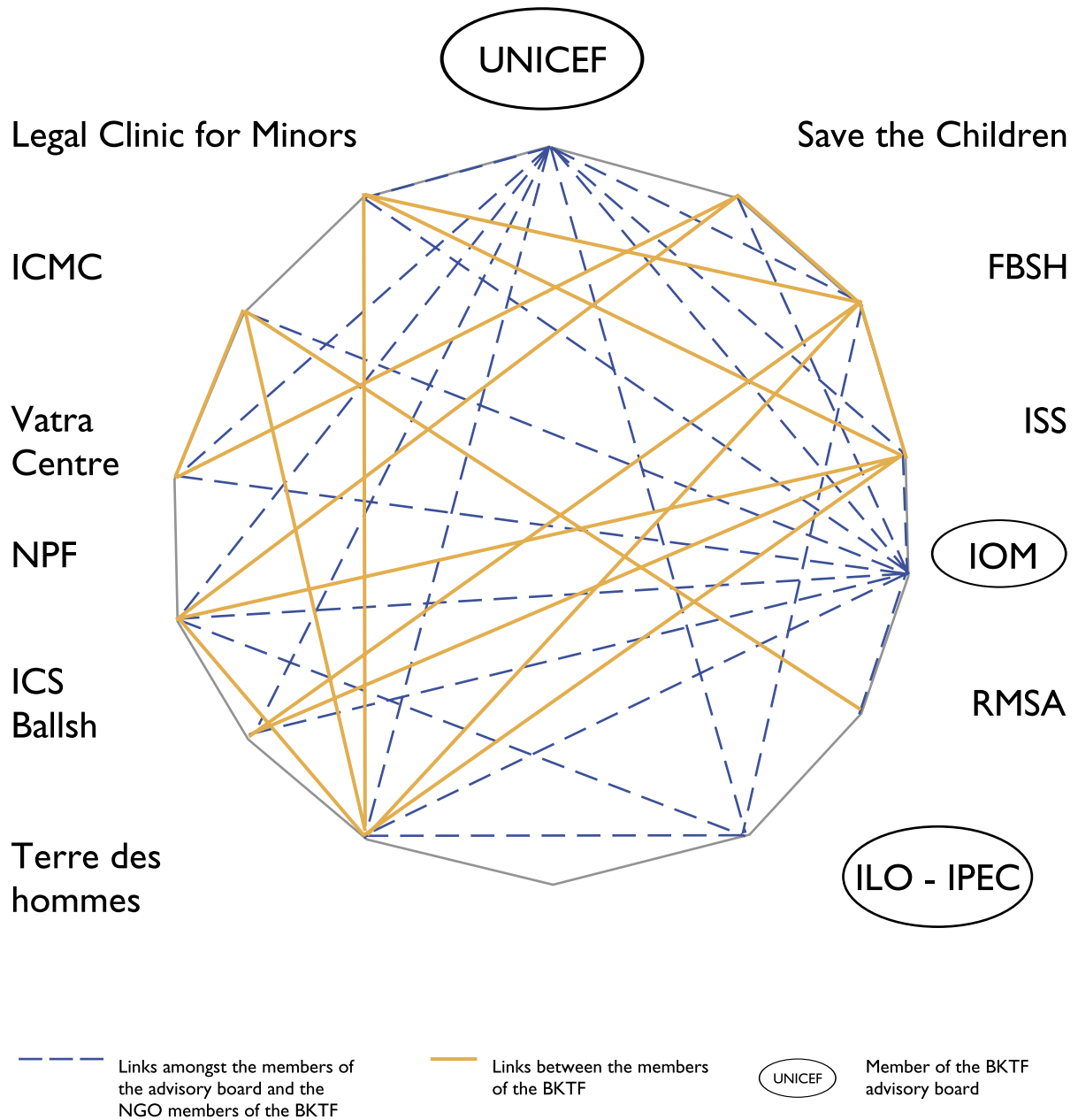
The activities are conducted in collaboration with the various Albanian ministries concerned – the Ministries of Labour and Social Affairs, of Education, of Justice, of Foreign Affairs, of Law and Public Order, combined in an interministerial group against child trafficking, under the direction of the National Co-ordinator (in Albania represented by the Minister of State). But it also includes Greek officials, the Public Prosecutor for Minors, the Juvenile Bureau of the Greek police, the Head of Child Welfare and the non-governmental organisations operating in Albania and Greece.

In Albania, the organisations have joined forces in a coalition called the BKTF, which stands for “së Bashku Kundër Trafikimit të Fëmijëve” (All together against child trafficking). It is legally registered as a national inter-NGO coalition which today includes a majority of national NGOs and some international NGOs. The Advisory Board related to the coalition comprises notably UNICEF, IOM, ILO-IPEC, USAID, a representative of the Albanian interministerial group working human trafficking and a representative of the Minister of State (National Co-ordinator for combating human trafficking). This Consultative Committee improves the operational ties between the intergovernmental organisations, the Albanian State and the NGOs in the field.

The operational objectives of this coalition are to exchange information, co-operate on case-by-case follow-ups, and provide broader geographical coverage. In the area of advocacy, this coalition allows the direct exchange of recommendations with the Albanian Government and with the Greek and Italian Governments. All the members of the coalition work in one of the two geographical combinations – Albania-Greece or Albania-Italy. So far, Terre des hommes has been deeply involved in co-ordinating what is happening in Albania and in the creation of the contacts between Albania and Greece. This Swiss foundation is now concentrating on Italy.

¹⁹ As the problem is not one of the freedom of movement of people, the fight against the impunity enjoyed by the traffickers and those who encourage them must be waged at the legal level.

In October 2003, the first annual report of the inter-NGO coalition very clearly showed the interrelationships between the various NGO members and with the Advisory Board.



3.3. Child welfare in the project

The principle of strategic parallelism to fight child trafficking (acting as a “counter-trafficker” in order to more effectively intervene), as well as the necessary TRUST relationship, must draw the attention of the participants in the project.

The child is at risk everywhere. While it is easy to analyse this risk when the child is being trafficked (the child is in the hands of its “owner”), it is more difficult to understand the risks to which the project itself exposes the beneficiary child and the case workers.

3.3.1. A high-risk struggle

What are the risks run by a child “counter-trafficker”? Having the same geographical mobility, the same approach to the families (to evaluating the degree of vulnerability, a gradual approach, entering into negotiation, winning the respect of the parents), while the parents and the recruiter are still negotiating, while that the trafficker is undoubtedly the neighbour, the cousin, a close relative. Two tools simultaneously became apparent from practice:

- **The “*foundation cover*”**

The “foundation cover” remains the most protective element for the project personnel. Parents, children, teachers and neighbours must see the case workers as people who want the best for the child, who simply want to get him or her back to school. The word “trafficking” is practically never used because its criminalizing dimension is obvious. On the contrary, the project workers concentrate far more on winning the parents’ trust and, in good faith, trying to help the child and the family better resist the traffickers. Trust is not only the most appropriate, but also the safest way of fighting this type of abstract network.

Other measures were taken to minimize the risks. The personnel always moves around in teams (two people), often accompanied by a third person, preferably a man, a role often played by the driver of the project vehicle. The teams are provided with mobile telephones and their movements planned ahead of time. Any change is announced. Vigilance must be permanent.

The risk indicators are often obvious – the categorical refusal of the head of family, pressures, even threats to the personnel, drawing upon traditional family rules (“I do what I want with my children”) or the family (“Don’t stick your nose into my affairs or you’ll see what you get”). For this, too, mechanisms are in place. The case worker’s superior goes to see the family directly and officially puts pressure on the parents in the name of the foundation.

- **Working with the police**

As mentioned in part 3.1.1, the relationship with the specialised police services remains very sensitive. It is essential that this co-operation never be clearly apparent to the families and the children. The establishment of a durable trusting relationship with them depends strongly on this.

However, when the best interests of the child are at stake (maltreatment, imminent departure of the child despite the efforts of the social teams, direct and repeated threats to the project personnel), the role of the anti-trafficking police is undoubtedly more effective. This solution, however, remains a last resort once all the social steps have failed.

The excellent partnership with the anti-trafficking police units applies not only to emergencies or high risks. The advanced training of their officers and their profound experience of this phenomenon, closely related to the worst kinds of social dramas, make sound and discreet allies of them.

On occasions, certain police officers themselves help families with their social formalities, and even become involved in improving the material conditions of a family (for example, repairing a roof).

3.3.2. The risks involved in the project

Sincerity, keeping one's word, knowing how to keep a secret, complicity, proximity, understanding, appreciation, respect, being non-judgemental are all qualities necessary for the establishment of a trusting relationship with the child, but they can also make the child extremely vulnerable.

The vast majority of the children helped by the project have been victims of abuse – physical or psychological maltreatment and sexual abuse through the worst forms of exploitation, and in the absence of any point of reference or protection.

It is therefore essential to interrelate the great fragility of the child, the project measures concentrating on a relationship for following it up and finally the participants in the project. A particular effort is made to ensure the quality of recruitment as well as the training of the social and educational staff. Here again, vigilance must be permanent to avoid exposing the child not only to external risk factors (violent reaction of relatives, traffickers or peers) but also to the always possible risk internal to the project (over a broad range extending from ordinary stigmatisation, to maltreatment and sexual abuse).

- **External risks**

To approach a child in situation of exploitation (the assumption of trafficking is constant) implies systematically exposing the child to danger from his or her "boss". After one or more contacts with the child in the street, what will he or she recount on returning? How will the exploiter react when he realises that the little vendor is spending too much time with adults? We know that violent reactions are common. The child could be "scolded" for not having held his or her tongue, or even moved to another district or another city, or moved to an activity less exposed to over-curious passers-by.

Evaluation of the risks – and thus of the adverse effect – of a project intervention must be a permanent reflex. Once back from Greece or Italy, if children confide, recounts their adventures, give the name of their former employers, or explain where and how they crossed the border, all this information is both the children's own secret but also a question of their protection.

When the children testify before a Court of Justice, they are exposed. And the best intentions come to nought if no solution exists for their protection. Recently, Terre des hommes has changed its family reception system to move and protect children who give evidence against their exploiters. At the time of writing this document, legislative bills on the protection of witnesses, a long time in preparation, have just been adopted in Albania.

- **Risks internal to the project**

Although the risks of child traffickers infiltrating the teams of community workers have been well evaluated and much reduced, there is no way of being sure that a project staff member will never take advantage of his hierarchical position or his social influence to abuse a child.

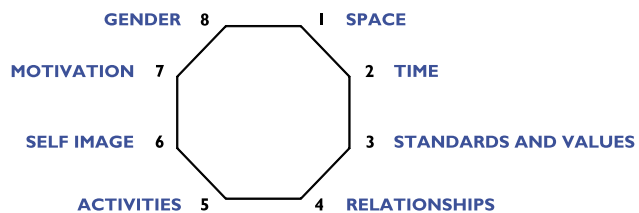
Terre des hommes has given some very serious thought to this ever-present risk and has developed a range of rather thorough preventive tools and checks: checks on selection, personality tests, an alert system available to the beneficiaries and the personnel, sensitization and vigilance of the teams, etc.

The winning of a child's trust by a member of the team should never lead to moments when the minor is left completely isolated with the adult. The open-door policy, cross-interview techniques, and family visits by two people make it possible to ensure the transparency of the relationships with a satisfactory degree of discretion.

Action model

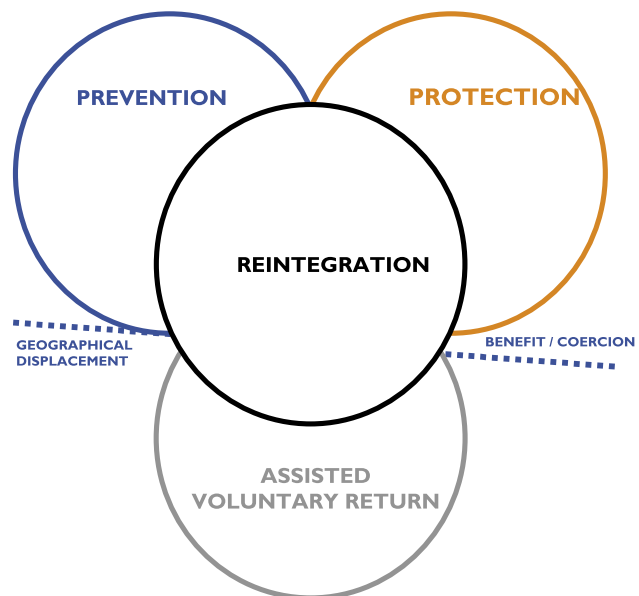
1. Why?

In order to determine the reasons for which the child is at risk of being trafficked by an analysis using the street-child system (systemic approach).



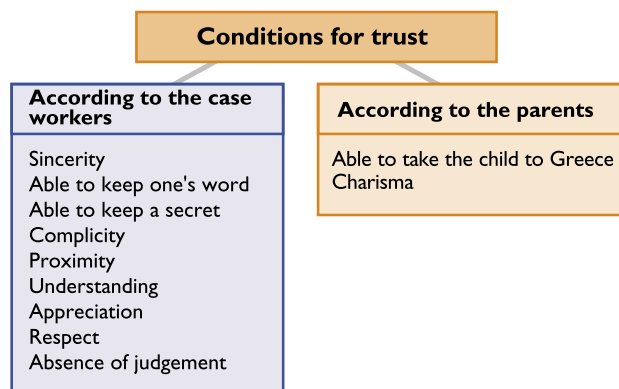
2. What?

Set up a series of complementary transnational networked activities.



3. How?

Components necessary to (re-)establish a relationship of trust between the child and his/her immediate environment (parents, community, school, etc.)





Real-life stories

A little girl working as an illicit street vendor in Greek tourist resorts tells her story:

“My parents were in need “

“My name is Kristina Leka²⁰, I live in Korça²¹ and I am 12 years old. One day a man came to our home and had a discussion with my parents. From time to time, they looked at me and the man smiled at me. My parents said I was to leave for Greece with him, because we were poor, we had neither money nor a house. That same day, about midnight, I left with him.

It was a long journey. We crossed the mountains, and after 3 days we arrived at Thessalonica. The following day, he took me out to the street to sell handkerchiefs. I worked very hard, from 9 in the morning until midnight. I earned 2000- 3000 drachmas²² a day, but he was not satisfied and he beat me because he wanted a lot of money. Then he made me beg. I begged in the bars in Agio Dimitriu Square. I earned a lot but he beat me anyhow. His wife and her sons beat me, too.

He told me I had to earn lots of money because my parents needed it.

One day, when I was begging, the police arrested me. They took me to centre, at Uncle Indrit's (Filoxenia). There were other children there. I spent a few months there and then I returned to Albania.”

Kristina was repatriated and sent to Korça in July 2001 thanks to a joint effort by the Filoxenia centre, the Albanian NPF foundation and the Tdh team in Korça. She was immediately taken into the Tdh child-trafficking prevention programme and was entered into the personal records. Unfortunately, according to her mother, she set out for Greece again at the end of August, but this time with her father.

An investigation is currently in hand to find out under exactly what conditions little Kristina set out the second time and whether it was a case of child trafficking. This enquiry between Albania and Greece will be made very difficult, to say the least, because Kristina has undoubtedly already changed identity after crossing illegally.

²⁰ Fictitious name

²¹ Near the Greek border

²² Between CHF 8 and CHF 13

A small 9-year-old Albanian boy returns home alone after 2 years' absence being exploited in Greece where he had an accident:

“I want to go back to school”

“My name is Agim Guri²³, I will be 11 years old next October. I live in Elbasan with my mother and my two sisters. After two years of elementary school²⁴, I went to Greece with two other children - Ermir and Gentian. The person who took us to Greece was called Dritan, he is my mother's cousin. He convinced my mother by promising her money.

We walked through the mountains for days and we arrived at the Alexandria Bridge, very near to Thessalonica. Then I started to beg and sell handkerchiefs at the seaside (in Paralia). We slept on the bridge, all snuggled up together. One day, I even fell off the bridge because the others pushed me. Dritan burned me with his cigarettes because I did not earn enough money. However, when I begged, I earned 15,000 drachmas²⁵ a day, and when I sold handkerchiefs, I earned 5,000 drachmas²⁶ a day, but he always beat me.

One day, when I was begging at a crossroad, I had an accident; a car hit me. I was taken to hospital and was operated on. The driver of the car, a Greek man, came to see me at the hospital and gave me 20,000 drachmas.²⁷ I stayed in hospital for several months.

Then an Albanian, Indrit, came to meet me when I left hospital to take me to a reception centre: Filoxenia. There were lots of Albanian children there! There, I studied my third year of elementary school (in Greek) and I was the best! I also played football. I stayed at that centre for a year and half. But I missed my sisters and my mother. Then one day I said to the teachers that I wanted go back to Albania. They helped me set out from Thessalonica by bus. They gave me money and clothing and I reached the border all alone.²⁸ Then, I took the bus to go to Korça²⁹ where my mother and my uncle were waiting for me.

Last year I began the second year of elementary school but I gave it up. Now I want to go back to school with my friends. “

Agim, who is considered a child at risk in the TdH child-trafficking prevention project, takes part in all the activities and entertainments. Moreover, he and his family have been entered in the records that are used to find children in Greece, in case he disappears again.



²³ All the identities have been changed

²⁴ At 9 years of age

²⁵ approx. CHF 65

²⁶ approx. CHF 22

²⁷ approx. CHF 87

²⁸ between 5 and 6 hours by road

²⁹ 1 hour by road

Conclusions and future challenges

The children are the first source of information. They themselves testify daily to their own stories – their past activities, their current state of mind, their future plans.

The first necessity in fighting child trafficking is to directly assist the children. Too many international organisations and public services engaged in this fight tend to forget that direct contact with the child is the prerequisite to finding an appropriate, case-by-case answer. The accumulation of these individual answers produces a model of action built on a research-action process.

All manner of information drawn from this daily practice of assisting children contributes to creating the prevention messages, to improving the protection mechanisms, to helping the children to return home, and to finding solutions for their reintegration into society and school life.

This summarises the intervention model developed by Terre des hommes and Ndhinë Për Fëmijët, and continued today by the Albanian inter-NGO coalition “BKTF”³⁰: **Prevention, Protection, Assisted Voluntary Return, Reintegration**. The Albanian Government has moreover adopted this model while also adding to it **Prosecution** when preparing its strategy to fight child trafficking and its national action plan.

The idea of **Co-ordination**, the last component of this process, is the *leitmotiv* developed by the **strategic parallelism** approach. Child trafficking functions as a network, therefore we must organise our activities as a network. If specific criminal activities are performed together (recruiter, passer, exploiter), then we will seek to match them in the other public NGOs or services: preventive devices, legal assistance, detection in the street, specialised educational programmes, witness protection, etc.

To fight child trafficking alone is impossible. And to fight this plague, in isolation or not, with only solutions suggested by civil society is also a very short-term view. If we analyse the major reasons underlying this phenomenon, we see that it is facilitated by the weakness or the absence of child welfare mechanisms.

The public services – social, educational and health services, the specialised organisations and the courts – must learn to work better together. With the municipal services (registrars, social housing, etc), which of course play an irreplaceable local role, the public services weave the first network of immediate protection around the sectors of the population which are at risk. In a country in transition such as Albania, civil society plays a complementary role in tightening the sometimes all-too-loose mesh of this protection network.

These good practices, developed on the ground, sometimes at municipal level, between national and international NGOs and with qualified and motivated public services, must be reproduced at national level. In the first half of 2004, the BKTF coalition proposed to the Government the setting up of a child welfare network, active in each of the twelve Albanian regions. This proposal corresponds not only to good local practices, which draw on several years’ experience, but it also meets the concrete needs for the creation of a national strategy to fight child trafficking.

The reinforcement of the child welfare mechanisms is the indispensable condition for the development of transnational protection mechanisms. How, indeed, could it be possible to sign a bilateral agreement with Greece or Italy without, as a prerequisite, having established better prevention, protection and social reinsertion services for the children in the country of origin?

³⁰ së Bashku Kundër Trafikimit të Fëmijëve: “All together against the trafficking of children”, this coalition of NGOs as of April 2004 comprised 12 NGOs specialised in combating child trafficking. The majority of them are national NGOs.

The Albanian Government has adopted this need as being one of the major priorities of its policy. It remains today to put it into practice with the same spirit of co-operation and openness that Albania has shown since 2001.³¹

Child welfare

The weaknesses of child-welfare policies lie not only in countries in transition such as Albania, but also in administrative red tape and lack of reaction in the countries of Western Europe, towards a rapidly changing, highly flexible and reactive phenomenon.

When dealing with a transnational problem, where a crime is committed in several countries, one cannot ignore the current context of the expansion of the European Union. The borders of the European Eldorado are pushed back day by day and with them, the borders of poverty, the limits of the access to information, education and so forth.

Child trafficking is a business. Supply and demand are in constant interaction. To try to control this market, it is necessary to understand these interrelationships and to build bridges between countries. The first will be set up by the NGOs which are more flexible and have the obligation to find immediate solutions with the sole aim of preserving children from this plague.

The approach adopted by Terre des hommes and Ndihmë Për Fëmijët initially concentrated quite logically on the bilateral movement on the roads taken by Albanian children going to Greece. As humanitarian organisations, the two foundations chose this geographical concentration to develop a precisely aimed service of direct assistance to children who had fallen or were at high risk of falling victim to this practice.

If we stick to this example between Albania and Greece, very soon the child protection systems will clash and become almost incompatible. How then can we think of setting up procedures of assisted voluntary return for unaccompanied Albanian minors which are legal, safe, prepared (with the child and the family) and rapid at the same time?

One of the solutions found in the field by the NGOs with the public services in the two countries consists of a very simple idea: understanding the situation in the other country. If the individuals in charge of institutions meet and each pay regular visits to the other side of the border, then a climate of trust can be born, favoured by a common will to fight together against a crime which afflicts both their countries. They will start on a case-by-case basis and then these good practices could be developed into a true transnational child welfare co-operation policy concluded by bilateral agreement.

We can see the efforts today made by Italy to help Albania in its fight against child trafficking. They are based on an excellent knowledge of the Albanian context. Simultaneous arrests of traffickers between the two countries are resulting in the dismantling of child trafficking networks. The advanced Italian policy as regards the assisted voluntary return of Albanian minors to their country of origin is often taken as an example.

Assisted Voluntary Return

Child trafficking is not a problem only in transitional countries. It is the problem of the countries of origin, transit and destination. By the age of 12, a boy from central Albania will have crossed Greece, Italy and France. He usually speaks the three foreign languages and he has performed all kinds of activities. He will have been exploited in four countries for far too many years. Why? Did the institutions or NGOs which located this "street urchin" offer him any appropriate solution? The answer is mainly "no". Just compare the statistics for disappearances of foreign unaccompanied minors in Switzerland, France and elsewhere. All the figures say the same thing: the children disappear on the first, second or third contact so there is thus no time to protect them.

³¹ The first Albanian national strategy to fight the trafficking of human beings was proposed to the international community in 2001.

The primary reaction of the State is “let’s create a structure!” The increase in the number of inmates of the reception centres is not a good sign either. What happens to little foreign migrants when they are placed in an institution? Does that cater to any of the choices which they might be entitled to make? Sometimes, the child is even recorded under the false name which he or she was used to giving in the street. Loss of identity, culture, and family. A teenager who had just escaped from an Italian centre, on his return to Albania, said, “They offered me a roof, but nothing else!”

The responsibility of State bodies and civil society in all the countries of origin, transit and destination, is very heavy. The principle of **Voluntary Assisted Return**, developed by the IOM, is undoubtedly one of the best solutions. One no longer speaks of repatriation, but of **return**, this step is thus assisted. It must be **voluntary** – it is essential to take account of the child’s choice, based on his or her capacities, maturity, and degree of vulnerability. So **assistance** is then of prime importance on both sides of the border. Family reunification meets criteria set in the country of origin by evaluating the capacity of the family of origin to take the child in again. It also meets the need for follow-up. Some public service or an NGO must be able to ensure at least one year of specialised social follow-up after the child returns.

The child is a participant

But how can we understand the initial reasons for the child’s first departure? How are we to understand his or her current situation? What sort of adult will he or she become? The **street-child system** approach, extensively referred to from the first pages, helps the case workers, the educational personnel and all specialised professionals to better understand the street child or child at risk of being trafficked.

Systemic analysis never directly reveals social, economic and political factors, because they are abstract elements. It is the observation of concrete behaviour, of individual interactions, which informs us of these macrosocial elements. Indeed, **individual behaviour is both the reflection and the component of a social logic**. So we can start from the observation and the thorough analysis of a few individuals in order to grasp many things about the social environment in which we live.

The traditional meaning of child trafficking leads the participants to consider the child’s fate as a trajectory, like an object that has no influence over itself. But if we try to adopt the view the child has of his or her life, we see the choices. The question is whether we can speak of a trajectory or a career for a trafficked child? Is the child the object or the subject? This capitalisation exercise enables us to compare the careers of the children with a spiral. **At each stage, they acquire new skills. They increase the circle of their skills and the places they frequent. They will react differently thereafter if they find themselves in the same situation.**

Then we are faced with other challenges. Children who have grown up and who have already been trafficked often want to return to work in Greece to earn more money. It is more difficult to retain those. They can work for themselves but they can also fall into the clutches of a trafficker. Some of them, who have never known anything other than the street and the law of the “bosses”, can enlist younger children and exploit them in turn.

If we stick to the logic of strategic parallelism, **it is necessary to substitute the negative influence of these “big brothers” by education by their peers**. We have to count on the many children who have become young adults, from 16 to 20 years of age, who have lived more than half their lives in the street and who are **able to speak about it today with other young people, to advise them on their options**. The NGOs must even further develop their detection capacities if they are to set up this system. These children should be helped to make the right choice.

Resisting the trafficker

In a context of survival, what is it in the final analysis that makes a father or a mother agree to give a child to a third person? As we compared our experiences, we understood that the trust relationship is completely unbalanced. This imbalance can have historical reasons but it is also explained by the pressures the trafficker will exert on the family.

These pressures will durably compromise the responsibility of the parents, and the conditions of extreme poverty do not explain everything. Not all poor parents traffic their children. The cause is the inability to resist the trafficker, the parents' ignorance of the consequences and the distress which is caused by the trafficker's breach of the parents' trust. The recruiter is very often a close relative, a neighbour or a cousin.

Ultimately, only two precise things are needed to abuse the parents' trust – the trafficker has to be able “to pass” the child across the border, and he must have the charisma to ensure the commitment, respect or silence of the child's close relatives.

In response to this abuse, the case worker must restore **a true relationship of trust**. This trust must be reciprocal, based on principles that are as varied as they are difficult to keep up in the context of a project or a public service and these are **sincerity, keeping one's word, being able to keep a secret, complicity, proximity, understanding, appreciation, respect, and not being judgmental**.

The key to the social approach adopted to child trafficking in Albania is to reinforce the ability of the parents to resist the trafficker.

Child trafficking is not inevitable

Trafficking has changed. Now, many children have returned to their country and rejoined their families. But others are disappearing. The streets have been cleared of hundreds of kids begging at the crossroads. Is this a success? What has become of the illicit little hawkers of the Parisian underground? Or the little exiled singers who intoned a song from their country; first the Romanians, then they said they were Bosniacs, then Kosovars. No-one knows where they are. They may be involved in more underground, less visible activities such as clandestine work, the distribution of drugs, delinquency, prostitution or paedophilia.

Child trafficking is in constant evolution, according to supply and demand, market constraints (police repression, awakening of public opinion, etc). Let us be realistic; it is the traffickers who make the market. We will be always be lagging behind. What is the cynical margin that each sets itself? Child trafficking is not inevitable! It is a collective responsibility.

Day-in, day-out, the personnel of Terre des hommes and Ndihmë Për Fëmijët try to find case-by-case answers. In Albania as in Greece, the members of civil society and the public services know what good practices are. The key moment will come when national policies fall into line with these good transnational practices. Once we have a legal framework, accelerated procedures and a good understanding of what is happening in the neighbouring country, we will have achieved the desired flexibility, comparable to that enjoyed by the traffickers.

Our first source of information is the children who talk to us such as Alketa, 12 years old, who has begged in the streets of Salonica for two years: “I would like to go home, if Mummy agrees”. Is the answer simple or beyond our reach?

Publications:

- **A training module** (in Powerpoint format) is available in electronic format by request to the following address: vincent.tournequillert@tdh.ch
- **Recent publications by Terre des hommes Foundation about the fight against child trafficking:**
 - *Kids as Commodities? Child Trafficking and What to do about it* - International Federation of Terre des hommes - Mike Dottridge - 2004
 - *The trafficking of Albanian children in Greece* - Terre des hommes Foundation Lausanne - Pierre Phillippe, Vincent Tournequillert - January 2003
- **A database containing** hundreds of documents on child trafficking is available at www.childtrafficking.com

Contacts:

Coordination of the International campaign of Terre des hommes

Hilfe für Kinder in Not
Bundesgeschäftsstelle
Internationale Kampagne gegen Kinderhandel
Ruppenkampstr. 11a
Postfach 4126
D-49031 Osnabrück

Tel.: 0541/7101-182
Tel./fax: 0541/707233
Web: www.childtrafficking.org

Terre des hommes Foundation Lausanne

En Budron C8
CH-1052 Le Mont-sur-Lausanne

Tel.: +41 (0)21/654 66 66
Fax: +41 (0)21/654 66 77
E-Mail: terredeshommes@tdh.ch
Web: www.tdh.ch

International Federation of Terre des Hommes

31, chemin Frank-Thomas
CH-1208 Genf

Tel.: +41 (0)22/736 33 72
Fax: +41 (0)22/736 15 10
E-mail: intl-secr@iftdh.org
Web: www.terredeshommes.org

Terre des hommes Foundation Mission in Albania

Vincent Tournecuillert,
Head of Mission
Main office TIRANA
PO Box: 7426
Tirana - Albania

Tel.: +355 69 20 20 929
E-mail: vincent.tournecuillert@tdh.ch

Help for Children Foundation

Robert Stratoberdha
Director
55, Rruga Nuçi Naçi
Korça – Albania

Tel & Fax: + 355 824 36 03
E-mail: robert.npf@hotmail.com

Editing:

Daniel Stoecklin & Vincent Tournecuillert

Editorial contributions to this report:

Bernard Boëton
Amandine Garrier

Translation: Tradoc SA, Lutry

Revision: Liam Mc Carney

List of NPF and Tdh participants to workshops promoting best practices (in alphabetical order):

Andrea Spaho, Anila Gripshi, Anila Hazizi, Artur Marku, Aurel Koça, Ediola Çifligu, Edlira Bashmili, Enkeleida Tabaku, Entela Fejzo, Eriketa Bejleri, Ermelinda Vila, Ester Kaçuli, Kesiana Shamlli, Kristaq Gjergo, Ormela Stoja, Robert Stratobërdha, Rudina Lako, Stela Koça, Suela Poreci, Viktora Kapedani

Iconographies: ©Helen Tilbury

Photos:

- Tdh: Cover and pages 10, 23, 35, 37, 43, 46, 56, 57
- L'ILLUSTRÉ: pages 8, 12, 16, 18, 24, 27, 31, 39, 40, 47, 51, 68

STOP CHILD TRAFFICKING

