

MOVE

psychosocial development of children
through games and sport



Aim of the project: to improve the wellbeing of children by reinforcing psychosocial and methodological competencies of the animators working with them / **Duration of the project:** Jan. 2008 to June 2011
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Terre des hommes mandate

Terre des hommes is a child rights organisation, active in 30 countries throughout the world. The Foundation seeks the protection of the rights of every child, regardless of the child's origin and background and in conformity with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child. In achieving this aim, the activity of the organisation consists in: (a) Direct assistance to children and families suffering the worst forms of distress and (b) Serving as child rights ambassador towards government, community structures and other duty bearers in child protection.

One of the main principles of Tdh intervention is the **empowerment of the child**. The organisation assists the child in making informed choices and the best use of opportunities available to her or him. The activity of the organisation is conducted in close collaboration with parents, community members and governmental structures. Attention is paid to the sustainability of the services delivered, while the main focus remains the child rights perspective.

Tdh "Movement, Games and Sport" approach: a tool for improving the well-being of children and preventing child exploitation

Projects supporting the most vulnerable children often turn to activities such as games, sport or art. On an individual level these activities enable the children to reinforce their capacities and on a more global level, they support reintegration of the children into their family, local community and/or school system.

Games and sport are often the favoured approach since it allows direct and easy access to the children and is culturally accepted throughout the world. The prevention activities in Central and South Eastern Europe are based on recreational activities, implemented by Terre des hommes or by local partners (community-based organisations, schools, etc), during the whole school year and summer camps.

Games and sport can also be used as a psychosocial tool to improve children's personal and social competences, thus positively influencing their general well-being. Depending on the way it is used, it can help to develop and promote skills and values like self-esteem, trust, tolerance, respect, cooperation, honesty, creativity, responsibility, discipline, etc.

However, despite the great motivation of the animators involved, competencies are often lacking in the psychosocial field, as well as in the organisation, implementation and follow-up of the recreational activities, thus undermining their potential impact on the psychosocial well-being of the children.

In 2005, Terre des hommes launched a project called "Movement, Games and Sports" (MGS) in three different locations (Iran, Colombia and Sri Lanka). Its

aim was to develop adults' competencies (animators, teachers, educators...) in charge of vulnerable children¹ in order to enhance the quality of intervention and thus help **improve the well-being of vulnerable¹ children by using games and sport**.

This was done by developing a specific 3-step training methodology including a 2-week training to improve personal, social, methodological and technical skills of animators, an individual coaching time and a Training of Trainers (ToT) replication process.

The results were quite impressive thanks to the experiential learning approach. At the end of the project, the participants had gained in self-confidence, leadership and knowledge about methodology of physical activities, being thus able to organise psychosocial activities with children, as well as replicate parts of the training to their peers.



The children's situation in Central and South Eastern Europe

Central and South Eastern Europe has been faced with tremendous changes in the past 18 years. Transition started at political level before leading to drastic economical and social transformations. Although countries throughout the region are different (some even being new members of the European Union), the children's situations remain hugely similar: poverty, rise of criminality at all levels, discrimination of minority groups, breakdown of traditional family and community ties, States' inability to implement an effective local protection mechanism (due to a lack of human and material resources), and high unemployment rates. As a result, hundred of thousands of children try every year to migrate, seeking a better life in the European Union or other countries (e.g. Switzerland, Italy, France or Russia). In the process, they become vulnerable to exploitation, abuse and even trafficking, often ending up at the mercy of a "patron" who uses his child's status while confiscating his basic rights.

¹ Traumas due to natural disaster, conflict situation and displacement

Terre des hommes' action in the region

Terre des hommes intervenes in four countries of Central and South Eastern Europe (Albania, Kosovo, Moldova and Romania). Our model of action is original and based on several complementary principles at local, national and international level:

- Firstly a safety net is created around the child to prevent cases of exploitation and trafficking. Parents and communities are empowered, with support to micro-initiative projects and income generating activities. Furthermore, capacities of local authorities (social services, schools, etc) are strengthened, thanks to trainings and financial support. All stakeholders involved, private or public, are invited in a network to better address the children's needs.
- Moreover, advocacy at national level is carried out to share the experiences gained and lessons learnt.
- The intervention is transnational, i.e. targets the country of destination as well as of origin. This is why strong links are developed between Moldova/Russia, Albania/Greece, Albania/Kosovo, Romania/Spain and Romania/Italy. It enables our delegations to create effective prevention messages and to advocate for an improvement of assisted voluntary return.

Our action at field level aims to:

- Prevent abuse, exploitation and trafficking, through an improved detection of vulnerable children and a better management of their cases afterwards;
- Protect victims by working with a network of key stakeholders (police, social services and local authorities).

Lastly, Terre des hommes has established the Regional Child Protection Project (RCPP) for Central and South Eastern Europe based in Hungary, in order to enhance the expertise in the four areas of concern, to contribute to the common goal of better protecting children in migration against exploitation, as well as advocate for a better understanding and respect of the children's rights at European level.

Terre des hommes partnership with the UEFA: MOVE project – news Nov.2009

Aim

UEFA made a three and a half year commitment to fund the project that aims to help adults² in charge of children help develop their psychosocial and methodological skills, which – in turn – is used to improve the well-being of children in Romania, Moldova and Albania. Using the “Movement, Games

and Sport” (MGS)³ tool that has encountered success in Colombia and Sri Lanka since its introduction in 2005, the project hopes to build the children's self-esteem and trust through sport and games. As a result, children are encouraged to go to school and stay in their community, which hopefully enhances the chances of protecting them from exploitation and child trafficking.

Strategy

Based on two main axes, **psychosocial well-being** and **research-action / advocacy**, the project goes through three main phases. It is now ready to enter the 2nd phase in Romania and Moldova after 18 months, while Albania has started the 1st phase in May 2009.

The 1st phase is focused on **transfer of competences** through three steps:

- a. A 2-week training sessions held in August, September 2008 and May 2009. Three groups of 15 teachers, animators, and social workers gathered to discuss and experiment topics such as management of emotions, resiliency, children's needs, conflict resolution, etc. They also enjoyed building the group dynamics and trust through new ways of playing games, such as volleyball with water balloons or football in pairs tied by their arms, activities that can be used to encourage collaboration between children in team sports.
- b. A 6-week coaching period, reaching by now more than 200 individual visits on the field and bringing a very positive and encouraging effect on the behavior of the children involved.
- c. A Training of Trainers for the base group becoming trainers for their peers through 2x2 days replication sessions during which they pass on their newly acquired know-how; followed by 2 coaching sessions for each of the 12 participants. This major step has brought new competences to more than 220 animators in Romania and 90 in Moldova, and this multiplying process will go on until they reach more than 400 new MOVE animators in total.



³ MGS is a tool with a specific 3-steps **training methodology** to develop personal, social, methodological and technical skills of adults (animators, teachers, educators...) in charge of children in order to enhance the quality of intervention and thus help **improve the well-being of vulnerable³ children by using games and sport.**

² community-based animators, sport teachers, primary school teachers, social workers, educators and Tdh staff

The **2nd phase** lasts approximately 9 to 12 months and will be focused on **reinforcement** of MOVE actors and partners, as well as bringing in new ones, such as parents, mayors, sport ambassadors, etc. Refreshers for animators and trainers, regular activities with children, as well as intercommunity sport events, advocacy in order to reach sustainability through validation of MGS approach by the Ministry of Education, for instance.

The **3rd phase** for the last 6 to 9 months will focus on the preparation of the **phasing out** aiming at the project's sustainability.

Visibility

Several **MOVE sport events** have been organised throughout the year in Romania, Moldova and Albania for children, parents, partners, authorities and media. These games and **football fairplay** tournaments are very successful because their aim is to create a non-competitive atmosphere by giving points to normal goals as well as fair play attitudes or by encouraging respect and collaboration between boys and girls through special rules. Many communities are gathered together and each child receives a medal, a UEFA cap and a T-shirt. All this, as well as the dedication of tens of MOVE animators, give these events a special touch: a spirit of integration and equal treatment for all...



Capitalisation

The results of a 1st capitalisation mission in Romania after 10 months reveal numerous positive effects on children and adults. On a personal level, children have learnt how to express their feelings and emotions more freely, to better deal with their frustrations and to take more responsibility over their actions. On a social level, they have learnt to better accept children from other communities without discrimination, thanks to games focusing on collaboration rather than competition. This specific **participatory pedagogy** has also reinforced the integration of Roma children. One director whose school benefitted from MOVE project is enthusiastic:

"This approach develops a team spirit, discipline, more openness and cooperation between children.. 100 pupils out of 1000 have been "MOVED" and there is a now a type of contamination at school. (...)There is a change in teacher's mentalities regarding their relation with their pupils. They understood how to make partners and actors out of the children. (...) I think that this training should be integrated in professors' curricula."

Teachers and animators have also gone through personal changes, such as increasing their self-esteem, improving better relationships with their colleagues, as well as learning an efficient methodology of learning through games and sport focusing on integration rather than exclusion. They also built new and better bonds with the children and are highly motivated to go on implementing MOVE activities in the future.

"Before I couldn't always deal with difficult kids. After MOVE training I was able to tell the child that I had nothing personal against him, but only against his behaviour. And it worked! My feelings of anger disappeared and I think he was seeing me in a different way because I was not rejecting him anymore."

"Fairplay football deepened my conviction that who wins is not important. The importance is respect between players and the expression of their feelings."

"I am very proud of succeeding in teaching children how to play differently. They understood that emotions ca be dealt with without reacting violently."

"Games and physical activities in MOVE project give children trust in them and in a particular way, help promote cooperation."

