



City of Oslo
Agency for Social and Welfare Services

How can we best identify and protect minor (migrant) victims of trafficking?

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Minor drug dealers (North African boys)

- Unaccompanied minors (15-18 years) from Algeria, Tunisia, Morocco and Libya
- Drifting in Europe – “street youth”
- Undocumented – asylum seekers - undocumented
- Concerns related to: physical and mental health, drug use, criminal activities, housing, lack of care and adult supervision, vulnerability to exploitation
- “Protected” or controlled by adult drug dealers
- 2008 – 2013: 122 out of 355 in the drug scenes of Oslo
- 2010 – 2013: 53 identified as possible victims of trafficking (out of 248 minor victims)
- 2014: The immigration authorities introduces new routines for this group (age determination + quick processing)
- Victims or criminals?
- “They don’t want help”

The support system vs. adolescents' life projects

(Mai 2010)

- European social services and institutions address migrant children and young people mainly as vulnerable victims in need of protection.
- The subjects see themselves as young adults who have to provide the means of subsistence for their families left at home and for themselves. In fact, they feel victimized by the very instruments of protection preventing them from working as a way to avoid child exploitation.
- As a result, many leave the institutions and programs targeting them and decide to live on the street, which is seen as offering better ways of meeting their aspirations and priorities.
- Paradoxically, the street and errance are the only spaces of social interaction allowing them to express their contradictory aspirations to a late modern lifestyle of fun and self-realization (freedom) and the necessity to provide for their families at home (money).

Migrant street children

Street careers (Lucchini 1993)

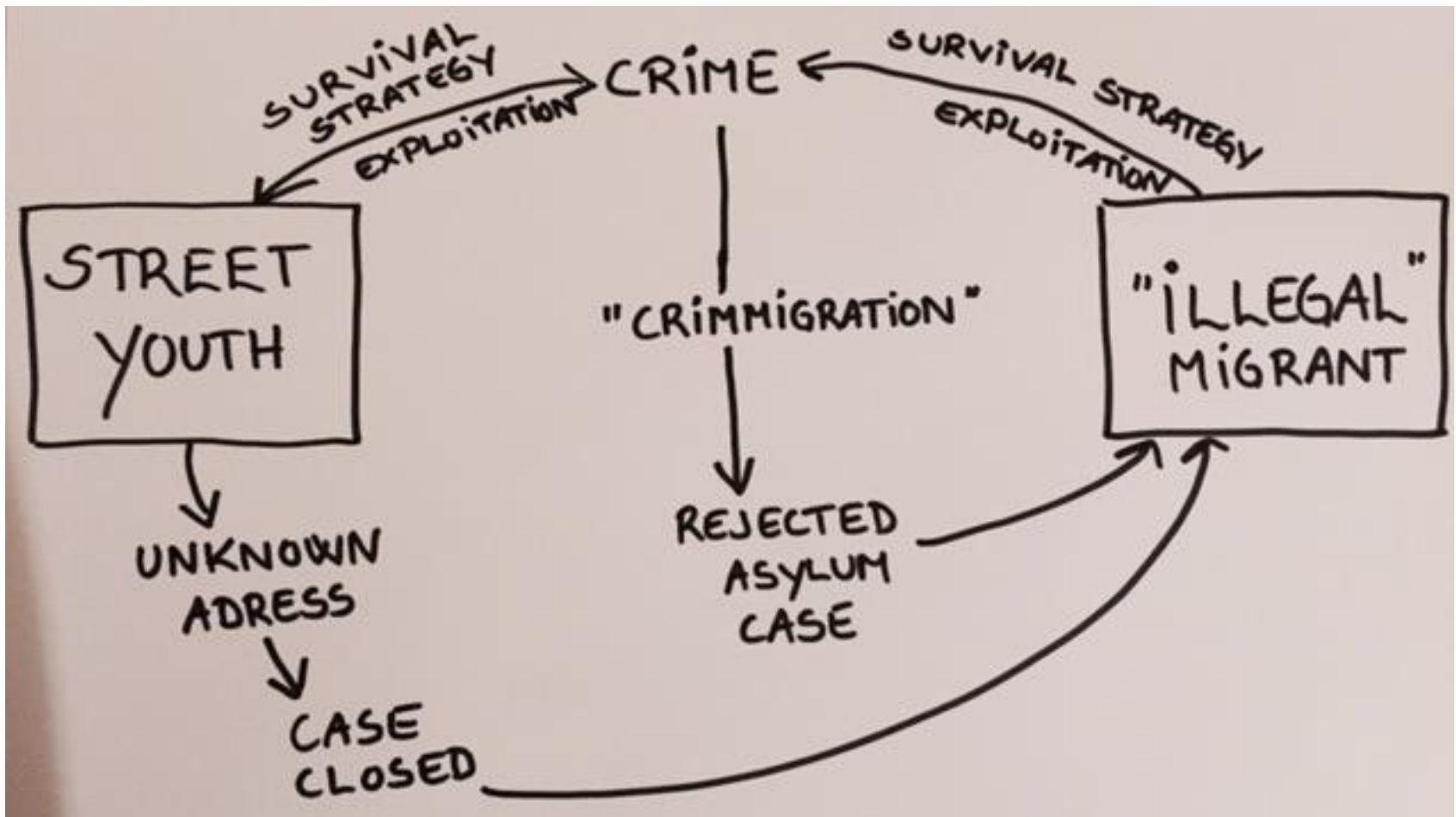
- Instrumental competences: concrete actions to make money to survive (visible)
- Symbolic competences: long term survival strategies

Learning to be illegal (Gonzales 2011)

Migrant street youth have to learn both how to survive on the streets (both short term and long term) and how to be an illegal, in a foreign land where they don't know the language, the system or their rights.

= long term effects, difficult transition to adulthood

The relationship between street life and migration status





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

A survey by Save the Children Norway, 2012

Line Ruud Vollebæk



The online survey

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



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The interviews

22 interviews with a total of 32 persons

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



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The child protection service's knowledge of trafficking in children

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



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The child protection service's knowledge of trafficking in children

- 65 % state that they have received no training or information about trafficking in persons while working in the child protection service (44 % with personal experience, 76 % in big municipalities)
- 81 % state that they have no knowledge of routines for identifying children who are victims of trafficking in persons (64 % for those who have received training in trafficking in children, 50 % for those who have personal experience of cases of child trafficking)
- Only 14 % state that in their own experience they have enough knowledge to handle a case of trafficking in persons if they were given the responsibility for such a case tomorrow.
- Experience with earlier cases of trafficking in persons is pointed out as the single most important precondition for feeling sufficiently competent in working with child trafficking cases in the child protection services



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

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



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Challenges

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



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Child protection officers' recommendations

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



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

- A national centre of competence should be established to deal with cases involving vulnerable migrant children, with particular competence in trafficking in persons and in issues related to migration
 - child protection cases in Oslo
 - develop and share knowledge and methods nationwide
 - international cooperation
- Regional teams of competence
- Grant systems / project funds should be established directed towards work with children exploited in trafficking in persons, and with prevention among vulnerable migrants



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

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



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

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

Think outside the box!

- Not all young migrants fits inside the "asylum"-box or "human trafficking"-box – but they still need care and protection!
- Focus on 'best interest' of each individual child (not as just a representative of the group 'migrant / separated children')
- Best interest of the child is better determined by social /child protection workers than the immigration authorities
- Vulnerable and/or exploited children:
 - ✓ a case for the child protection services first (to consider individual needs)
 - ✓ later maybe the asylum system, ordinary child protection assistance or specialized institutions for victims of trafficking (based on individual situation and needs)

Prevention and protection

- Safer migration = safer migrants
- «Preventive information» and information about rights and where to get help
- Outreach social workers
- Protect minor victims from exploitation – voluntarily and involuntarily (Norway: placement in closed institution for up to 6 months)
- Think long term!
- Specialized Child Protection Team
 - all child protection cases involving separated children
 - with expertise in human trafficking and migration-related issues
- Cooperation between the child protection services, outreach services, police and immigration authorities
- Agency-specific indicators and training

Thank you for your attention!