



Can we tell children “Do not migrate!”



Programmatic challenges from the field

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Overview of the presentation

- ✔ Area of work and motives
- ✔ Rapid assessment
- ✔ Addressing child migration through community initiative
- ✔ Challenges of funding





Geographic area of work

- ✓ North eastern part of Albania
- ✓ Largely described as under the grip of informal economy;
- ✓ The most depressed in the country with the rural areas having little arable land, poor infrastructure, unemployment and heavy male migration especially to the UK.
- ✓ Close to 50% of the population receives social aid.





Children in the north east

- ✓ Children make up close to 40% of the area's population of 300,000 inhabitants.
- ✓ Low quality of services
 - Education
 - Health
 - Protection





Children and households

- ✓ Children part of a local culture that considers them indispensable to the household economy;
- ✓ Socialized from early on to contribute to this economy long hours, at times at the expense of other activities otherwise deemed as appropriate for their age, such as school attendance and leisure.
- ✓ Another study surveying 1200 children from the same area (Orgocka, 2007) finds that, irrespective of gender:
 - Close to 35% of the children start working earlier than 10 years of age;
 - Close to 47% at the age of 10-12 years;
 - Close to 50% are engaged in housework activities more than three hours a day.
 - Caring for a sibling or doing other household work were the main reasons for not attending school regularly.





Rapid assessment

✓ Informed by:

- Local reports on child illegal migration and smuggling;
- Requests to do household evaluations of children about to be returned to Albania;
- Pronounced dearth of literature and formal research for this region.





Rapid Assessment - Data

- ✓ Survey, focus group and individual in-depth interviews with
 - 150 children between the ages of 10-18 years old
 - 150 representatives of state employees, school educators, Anti-Trafficking and Border Police, active community members, and parents.





Rapid Assessment -Findings

- Migration of children for work - a fact of life and a resource that families increasingly depend on.
- Revealed tension between how communities define trafficking (negative connotation) and smuggling (positive connotation).
- Although families and children may be aware of the risks involved, children migrate seasonally on the off-chance that they will not be targeted by traffickers.





Rapid Assessment - Recommendations

- ✓ Prevention efforts re trafficking and illegal migration need to:
 - be relevant to the context;
 - mobilize the resources of various stakeholders;
 - address the needs of children and communities with accurate information.
- ✓ Migration as not appropriate for children.
- ✓ Concentrate on risk factors that make children migrate and focus on prevention.





Addressing child migration through a community initiative

- Capabilities approach – Amartya Sen
- Importance of looking into “*the actual living* that people manage to achieve”
- What a person can succeed in doing with the primary goods at one’s command;
- Focus on what is of intrinsic value in life rather than the goods that provide instrumental value or utility.





Addressing child migration through a community initiative

- ✓ Differentiate between functioning and capability
 - Functioning = what people actually do
 - Capability = what people are able to do given the personal and social situation.
- ✓ When applied to children, of importance:
 - Social opportunities
 - Protective services





Addressing child migration through a community initiative

- ✓ Mobilizing core community groups to address factors that decrease children's opportunities to do and be;
- ✓ Making efforts personal;
- ✓ Volunteer groups consisting in:
 - Teachers;
 - Parents;
 - Local government
 - Police;
 - Representatives of student governments
- ✓ Lobbying and taking action to diminish risk factors





Addressing child migration through a community initiative

✓ Examples:

- Lobbied and opened a school in an area where school had been unjustly closed;
- Linked to local government to increase economic aid for families in need;
- Register girls to school;
- Bring boys back to school;
- Reconciliate families in blood feud.





Addressing child migration through a community initiative

▼ Drawbacks:

- Volunteer work – No long term commitment;
- Countering a widespread mentality and hard facts that child migration is a quick fix to the situation;
- Countering urban myths of responsibility free childhood.





Addressing child migration through a community initiative

✓ Short term solution

- Cannot prevent child migration;
- Information campaigns on what children should expect to find;
- Increase basic skills such as writing and reading.





Challenges of funding

- ✓ Issues addressed linked to an effective child protection system;
- ✓ Practically a non-existent child protection system in Albania;
- ✓ No funding from the government;
- ✓ Dependent on donors whose understanding and funding agenda may not correspond to needs identified by NGOs.





Thank you!

