

ANALYSIS OF PREVENTION INITIATIVES IN SOUTH EASTERN EUROPE

1. Criteria for assessing prevention initiatives

This chapter presents and comments upon prevention initiatives that have already been implemented in South Eastern Europe. The analysis takes into account whether the principles for good programming (described in Chapter 5) have been followed and whether evidence is available that the initiatives were effective.

One additional element which is evident in many good prevention initiatives is the degree to which an initiative addresses coordination with other agencies pursuing similar objectives in the same or different countries. In theory cooperation is not in itself a criterion for success, but in the context of human trafficking, where the victims are moved from place to place, it is virtually essential. This issue is examined in section 4 of this chapter.

Anti-trafficking efforts have been going on in South Eastern Europe for most of a decade but relatively few initiatives have been subjected to formal evaluation. This means how effective they are goes undocumented or even unknown—a cause for serious concern and an urgent justification to get on with systematic evaluations.

This chapter clusters the strategies according to the ‘supply’ and ‘demand’ sides. Comments that apply to several different strategies are presented only once. The analysis also notes the different ways of combining strategies. Finally, the chapter reviews some prevention strategies from other regions that may be applicable to South Eastern Europe.

2. Strategies on the ‘supply’ side

The analysis in this section focuses on strategies to protect children who are considered to be at especially high risk of being trafficked.

2.1 Information and education strategies

a) Lack of impact assessment

A review of USAID-financed counter-trafficking programmes noted that by 2004 public awareness campaigns had been conducted virtually everywhere in Europe and Central Asia. However, the review observed that reports to USAID about the campaigns “provided little information that could be used to assess the impact of the campaigns in a way that would be useful in determining best practices for similar programs in the future.”⁵⁴ The same comment can be made about most information campaigns financed by other donors, making it difficult to know whether they have had the impact which those organizing and funding them intended.

Various methods are available to test whether people acquire new knowledge as a result of information campaigns. The principal method used in South Eastern Europe is ‘before’ and ‘after’ questions to some of the persons exposed to new information. This is just one of several methods that can test whether someone’s knowledge has increased but it does not measure whether their behaviour is likely to or does change.

b) Avoiding stereotypes

Informally, anecdotally, some information campaigns are reported to have had a high impact on children but exactly, authoritatively what that impact is remains unclear. The information initiative with the highest profile was the film *Lilya-4-ever*,⁵⁵ which warns of the risks involved in accepting money for sex. The film tells the story of a teenage girl in an anonymous Russian city whose single mother emigrates, leaving her behind. Lilya is trafficked to Sweden by a young man who pretends to be her boyfriend. She is kept locked up in a flat and forced to have sex with men who pay her captors. The film has a tragic ending.

⁵⁴ R. Rosenberg, S. Lazaroiu and E. Tyuryukanova, op. cit, pages 7 and 8.

⁵⁵ A film by Lukas Moodysson. 2003.

In the Republic of Moldova, a cinema chain agreed to give free showings of *Lilya-4-ever* in cinemas around the country during the winter holidays of 2003-2004. Between 30,000 and 50,000 Moldovans are estimated to have seen the film.⁵⁶ A number of initiatives were run in parallel with the film: organizations handed out leaflets in cinema lobbies to young people attending the film and cinema-goers were questioned about what they thought they had learned from the film. Representatives of the NGO La Strada are reported to have talked with young people leaving the cinema to make sure they did not think that only girls abandoned by parents were in danger of being trafficked or that Sweden was the only destination.

There is increased awareness about the importance of emphasizing that there are no easy 'profiles' of traffickers, trafficking and the trafficked. For example, all too often traffickers are presented as sleazy male criminals or predatory young men. However, some of the 23 young people interviewed for this report had been trafficked by a close female relative. There are many other reports of adolescents being trafficked by female relatives or friends of the family rather than anonymous criminals. Using stereotypes in an information campaign can leave adolescents off guard, e.g., as in the case of a trafficked girl interviewed for the author in September 2005 who had unwittingly agreed to accompany a relative on holiday.

The ways in which children and adolescents can protect themselves against people with whom they have close social ties are bound to differ from warnings about 'bad company' intended to make them wary of possible criminals and predatory men. One starting point is to avoid any stereotypes in information campaigns.

c) Targeting a specific audience

On the whole, information campaigns aimed at children have drawn too much upon models used to target adult women, rather than upon other efforts to influence children's behaviour. Many lessons can be taken from related fields such as advertising, advocacy and public health on how to run awareness campaigns that positively influence children.

The field of public health has a great deal of experience in measuring the impact of awareness-raising efforts on people's behaviour, notably in relation to HIV/AIDS. In one country, for ex-

⁵⁶ Reported as 30,000 by B. Limanowska, op. cit., page 29.

ample, it has been established that children who have higher levels of general education are more responsive to awareness-raising campaigns, more likely to modify their behaviour and less likely to become HIV-positive.⁵⁷ Reviews of efforts to influence children's sexual behaviour emphasize the importance of:

- finding out what the target audience already knows before deciding what message to deliver; and
- pre-testing the information materials on a focus group so materials can be modified before being distributed widely.

Once it is known from where children usually get information on a given topic, an attempt can be made to influence the information being transmitted along this channel. For example, if children routinely rely on information from their mothers, it is the mothers who need influencing. If most children rely on particular television shows (for example, soap operas) for their information about the outside world, these may be a suitable media for reaching them. A more systematic approach that includes all of these tactics has not been significantly tried in SEE countries, perhaps because funding for public education campaigns tends to come in the form of numerous, relatively small grants.

It is, however, now clear that there have been so many awareness-raising efforts that their novelty has worn off. Consequently new campaigns have to be innovative, well targeted and integrate the improved knowledge and understanding of the causes of trafficking, the profiles of victims and the entire trafficking chain, including trafficking routes. Donors should pool their money to mount campaigns that meet all these requirements, including knowing the target audience before launching a campaign and following up with an impact assessment.

d) Tailoring the messages

Most initiatives in schools have focused on the risks to adolescent girls and are aimed at students in their final years of compulsory schooling when they are aged 15 or 16. The review of USAID-financed efforts makes the logical proposal

⁵⁷ D. de Walque, "How Does the Impact of an HIV/AIDS Information Campaign Vary with Educational Attainment? Evidence from Rural Uganda," Policy Research Working Paper Series 3289, The World Bank, October 2003. Accessed 1 November 2005 at <http://ideas.repec.org/p/wbk/wbrwps/3289.html>

that classes should also be conducted in primary schools in areas where younger children have been trafficked rather than in secondary schools only.⁵⁸ In theory this should not be difficult to organize, particularly if an international organization such as UNICEF advises the Ministry of Education at the national level and NGOs or other social activists advise schools at the sub-national level.

When younger children belonging to the Egyptian minority were identified as trafficked from southern Albania to Greece, the Terre des hommes Foundation asked schools to let its staff talk to students between ages 11 and 14 and produced a special cartoon leaflet for this age group. The cartoon tells the story of an Albanian boy, Dritani, who is taken out of school, sent away to beg in a foreign country and eventually transformed into a ‘robot’—a term which trafficked Albanian children used to refer to their colleagues who were still being forced to earn money in Greece.⁵⁹

Terre des hommes naturally expected its school sessions and Dritani cartoon to have a useful preventive effect. However, by May 2005 the project director, while regarding the exercise as useful, was less confident that the classes had really had a preventive effect. The director felt that the practical support given to individual children and their families had much more impact.⁶⁰ Nonetheless, in a few cases, children who had attended information sessions informed Terre des hommes staff when a child dropped out of school and they feared he or she was about to be taken abroad.

Both the Dritani cartoon and a similar illustrative story about an Albanian girl were developed in response to a specific pattern of child trafficking in a specific area. Furthermore, Terre des hommes staff gave children information about trafficking without ever using the technical term ‘trafficking’ and their function was widely perceived by school children to be preventing children from dropping out of school. This was considered more appropriate than using the term trafficking because the term automatically implies that parents who send their children abroad have committed a crime. This in turn could have been interpreted as a criticism of a tradition which the community regards as part of its culture, rather than criticism of a particular sequence of events that damages

children. Thus, in creating this campaign Terre des hommes also took into account the fact that younger children do not have the same degree of agency or control over their own lives and actions as older adolescents. They may agree to go abroad and earn money with someone else when told to do so by their father or mother even if they know enough to be afraid of trafficking and exploitation.

e) The content of anti-trafficking messages

In her SEERIGHTS review Barbara Limanowska found that anti-trafficking materials in South Eastern Europe were “quite often” interpreted by the (mainly adult) target audiences as anti-migration propaganda. She felt this weakened their impact.⁶¹ The authors of the review of USAID-financed programmes also noted that raising people’s awareness about trafficking sometimes has unintended and even counter-productive side effects, such as provoking a fall in school attendance by girls in parts of Albania because their parents were afraid they might be abducted.⁶² Citing some images as “disturbing” and “scary,” the authors of the review said it was “not enough for those at risk to know only about the dangers and possible negative consequences” but that they also need to be given information “that can minimize risks even if this potentially increased the interest in migrating abroad of some of those receiving the information.”

Few of the messages indicate exactly what young people should do in order to avoid being trafficked, i.e., how they can make a decent living without migrating or how they can migrate and minimize risk. Too often the first step in warning young people about trafficking has not been followed by other steps to give young people the knowledge and skills they need to keep out of the hands of traffickers.

Not enough has been found out about the impact of materials aimed at children to know for certain how these are interpreted by children, but they have certainly tended to emphasize the ‘scary’ aspects of trafficking and failed to present information on how to minimize risks, other than by staying at home or not migrating.

When information campaigns contain more specific messages, particularly proactive ones that say what individuals should *do* as well as *not*

⁵⁸ R. Rosenberg, S. Lazaroiu and E. Tyuryukanova, op. cit., pages 43-44.

⁵⁹ ‘Dritani Robot’, illustrated by Fadil Fyshku, Terre des hommes Foundation (Albania), 2002.

⁶⁰ Personal communication, May 2005, in Albania.

⁶¹ B. Limanowska, op. cit., page 31.

⁶² R. Rosenberg, S. Lazaroiu and E. Tyuryukanova, op. cit, page 14.

do, it is usually easier to determine what recipients remember. Following a general information campaign in Latvia, an impact assessment asked adolescents and young adults whether they had heard of a list of recommendations on how to migrate abroad without being trafficked and, if so, how many times and from which sources. The main lesson was that “an information campaign is not so much about supplying the information but about supplying it on a repeated basis.”⁶³ The conclusion was: “Repetition was, in many ways, more important than diversity of content.”

f) Improving children’s skills

UNICEF has urged ministries of education throughout South Eastern Europe to introduce the teaching of life skills into the school curriculum. However, curriculum reform is slow and introducing sensitive new topics, such as sex education and trafficking, provokes opposition from various quarters. Despite the seriousness of trafficking, therefore, many school children in areas with high rates of trafficking are not being taught life skills.

The introduction of ‘life skills’ education in South Eastern Europe is relatively recent, however, and this makes it difficult to assess its impact as a technique to prevent trafficking. In the Republic of Moldova, boarding school graduates have made up a disproportionately high share (10%) of the victims of trafficking assisted by the IOM. So, in 2002 the Child Rights Information Centre (CRIC), with support from UNICEF, began a project in boarding schools entitled “Life Skills Education for the Prevention of Trafficking and Unemployment.” Experience indicates however, that it may take a long time to know whether the life skills classes given to 14- and 15-year-olds are having a preventive effect. In the past, boarding school graduates who have been trafficked have been in their early 20s by the time they returned to the Republic of Moldova and came to the attention of the IOM.

An additional factor in the Republic of Moldova concerns the way that the life skills curriculum has developed. In the CRIC project, priority was given to ensuring the participation of the students both as peer-to-peer educators and by encouraging feedback from them to refine the curriculum. At first CRIC staff and volunteers concentrated on older students (Grade 9, 15- or 16-year-olds in the final year of compulsory education) and pro-

duced a special “Guide for Graduates.” This included contact details for officials responsible for child protection around the Republic of Moldova and information on trafficking, as well as advice on how to get a job.

Although CRIC staff did *not* conclude that the Guide was *not* useful, the feedback from students suggested that it would be more useful to address a broader group of students, starting with 11-year-olds in Grade 5. Staff also began learning what problems the students themselves considered priorities. In this way child participation became a reality and influenced the content of the messages relayed to children. Ironically, however, this feedback loop reduced the focus on dangers that children might face after leaving school and shifted emphasis on to immediate issues for the students such as acquiring skills in communication, teamwork, decision making and conflict resolution. It remains to be seen if these equip the students to avoid being trafficked, either as children or as young adults.⁶⁴

While learning life skills certainly helps boarding school graduates cope with the world outside their schools, the lack of employment prospects in the Republic of Moldova may persist as a reason for young people to migrate abroad. The question then will be whether life skills are enough to keep young migrants from falling under the control of traffickers.

It would be useful to monitor what happens to these children and compare with the progress of children who have not been taught life skills.

2.2 Improving adolescents’ employment prospects near home

Strategies that emphasize getting decent jobs for school leavers face serious barriers. Firstly, only a limited number of jobs are available in South Eastern Europe, particularly in small towns and rural areas. Secondly wages for those who do get jobs are relatively low. A Romanian girl trafficked to an EU country said factory wages in Romania were so low it was not worth working.⁶⁵

⁶³ A. Boak, A. Boldosser and O. Bui, “Smooth Flight: A Guide to Preventing Youth Trafficking,” IOFA, 2003, page 95. For the list of recommendations, see the end of this chapter.

⁶⁴ The project started in 9 general boarding schools and is now running in 11—out of a total of 19 in the country. (There are 63 residential institutions run by the Ministry of Education, out of a total of 67 in the country, reported to house 13,000 children in 2004.) CRIC, *op. cit.*, supplemented by information from CRIC staff in September 2005.

⁶⁵ Interviews in Romania, October 2005.

Vocational training has proved effective in keeping children who have been trafficked from being re-trafficked. New skills enable them to find a job and earn an income in their own country. In Chişinău, the capital of the Republic of Moldova, the Island of Hope training centre has provided training for girls who have been trafficked. While living in residential accommodation, they acquire vocational skills varying from hair styling to construction work. Students are reported to have found satisfactory jobs upon graduating.⁶⁶

However, if larger numbers were trained in the same vocational skills, the employment market would swiftly be saturated and trainees would be unlikely to find jobs in the Republic of Moldova. Vocational training then needs to be closely coordinated with job openings. This strategy can create a supply of people with skills needed by the market, but it cannot overcome the inertia of an economy in the doldrums.

Different attempts have been made in the Republic of Moldova and elsewhere to promote business skills and help kick-start the economy—and thus prevent migration and trafficking. However, these attempts have focused on young adults rather than under-18s.

In communities where a significant proportion of adult women have been trafficked, NGOs have tried encouraging young women to establish their own businesses. A pilot scheme of this sort was implemented by the Italian Consortium for Solidarity (ICS) in 2003-2004 in a rural community in the Republic of Moldova where less than half the population of working age was employed. It involved giving training and small grants to women between ages 18 and 30 to start their own businesses and was judged by ICS to have been a success.⁶⁷

However, in the case of girls and boys under 18 vocational training and employment experience, such as apprenticeships, are likely to be more appropriate than investment capital and training to start their own business.

2.3 Influencing parents

For the most part, parents have responded positively to both information about trafficking and efforts to supplement their household income and reduce their dependency on the earnings of a child trafficked abroad. In the case of information, however, the impact has sometimes been counter-productive, e.g., the case mentioned above where parents in one area of Albania became too fearful to let their daughters attend school. When information about the potential harm to children is combined with practical support for families at high risk, the results have proved more positive.

2.4 Addressing violence against children

When social services are responsive to cases of domestic violence or child abuse, they have a choice between (a) taking action that protects the child in the home and (b) providing a safe alternative for the child outside the home. In the first case, an abusive parent might be given an official warning and required to attend a course on anger management and violence reduction. However, few initiatives of this sort have been reported.

In much of South Eastern Europe the second option has consisted of placing children from abusive families in boarding schools or other residential institutions. When it is necessary to separate a child from abusive parents, the choice of placement has to be guided by the best interests of the child and in consultation with the child. Little attention has been given to developing alternatives to institutional placements for such children.

Options of this sort have been made available to children who have already been abused, but not many are accessible to children who have not yet been identified as ‘victims’ of some form of abuse. In the UN Administered Province of Kosovo an NGO has developed a semi-independent living project for adolescent girls who have been subjected to commercial sexual exploitation. The project allows the girls to return to school and to get jobs while continuing to live in an apartment that is supervised by NGO staff. In a culture where adolescents who have been trafficked or abused are widely expected to return home afterwards (and are sometimes held in virtual captivity as a result), this is one of the few options opened up to adolescent girls who do not consider returning home a real option. It looks like a much more effective alternative than sending older adolescents

⁶⁶ According to several graduates interviewed in September and October 2005.

⁶⁷ Italian Consortium of Solidarity, “Final report on the impact evaluation of the Project for preventing unsafe migration and trafficking in young vulnerable women through business plan training and in-kind grants, implemented February-September 2003,” July 2004, unpublished.

to boarding schools or abandoning them to look after themselves. However, this option is more expensive and often perceived to undermine the traditional authority and structure of the family.

In addition, the lack of policies and measures that will enable early identification and timely referral to appropriate services remain the major weakness in addressing the violence against children in South Eastern Europe.

2.5 Identifying and protecting children at 'high risk'

When evidence shows that particular categories of children are being trafficked in greater numbers than others, e.g., children belonging to a certain ethnic group or from a particular geographical area, special efforts should be made to understand specific reasons and design actions to prevent the trafficking.

The analysis of existing data about children who have been trafficked reveals that the nature of the characteristics which they have in common varies. Only in the case of ethnicity is it relatively easy to pinpoint the common link with some confidence. When a disproportionately high number of children are being trafficked from a particular

geographic region, such as the Iași area in north-eastern Romania, it is obvious that preventive efforts should be concentrated there. In addition to investigating the causes for this trend it is also important to identify which and why particular children are most vulnerable and extend special protection measures to them and their families.

When it comes to common experiences that trafficked children had at home, e.g., domestic abuse, efforts might focus on ways to identify cases of maltreatment and to assist victims. Typically domestic abuse is evenly spread across South Eastern Europe rather than clustered in particular locations, so the only way to improve identification and assistance is to improve child protection systems across the board.

The same is true in the situation in the Republic of Moldova where girls from boarding schools have been identified as being over-represented among trafficked victims receiving assistance.⁶⁸ Apart from the specific measures taken *in* boarding schools, a broader effort needs to be made to prevent unnecessary placement in boarding institutions, ensure family contact and prevent abuse and violence in these institutions.

⁶⁸ CRIC, op. cit., page 7.

Box 5: Children from Iași

The case of the Moldova area in north-eastern Romania is one where it seems obvious that more could have been done to identify the children most at risk of being trafficked and the types of households they lived in.

In 2001 and 2002 the Department for Child Protection in Iași, the main town in Moldova, only knew of 12 children who had been trafficked abroad and had returned to the town to receive assistance. These were too few to observe distinct patterns indicating which sorts of children had been recruited.

Much more information became available in 2003 and 2004, when many more trafficked children returned from abroad, 27 and 25 children respectively. In addition, more than 70 adolescents (boys and girls) who had not finished compulsory education were discovered to have been recruited in rural areas near Iași to work on farms in the south of the country.

However, at the time the author visited Iași in September 2005, it was still not clear that the relevant authorities, such as the Department for Child Protection, schools and school inspectors, police, local government officials and NGOs, had digested the implications and identified the profile of children at high risk or taken any specific measures to protect them.

The Romanian national plan of action for preventing and combating trafficking in children includes the development of specific services to support families in difficult situations, especially in high risk areas. However, implementation of the plan relies chiefly on action being initiated by the authorities in the capital, meaning that those at the provincial and local level are not sufficiently encouraged to take initiatives, even though they are best placed to know or find out the profile of the children who are being trafficked.

Sources: Statistics from the coordinator of the transit centre for trafficked children in Iași, September 2005.

Objective 5, National Plan of Action for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Children and for Social Reintegration of Victims, 2004 to 2007 (English translation).

Even when the current profile of children who have been trafficked can be narrowed down, it is still vital to strengthen protection for a wider category of children. This approach can go a long way in preventing trafficking and in helping to avoid re-victimizing those who are already victims.

For example, in Albania, the Terre des hommes Foundation decided to provide all the children in the areas where children were being trafficked with information about the experience of children who had already been trafficked, rather

than targeting only children in the Egyptian community who were at high risk. At the same time, the NGO did focus its information sessions in schools known to be attended by children from the Egyptian community and did focus its most important protection measures, such as income subsidies, on households in the Egyptian community.

Identifying the profile of children being trafficked is just a first step towards understanding *why* they are being trafficked in disproportionate numbers

Box 6: Combining information and support to protect children 'at high risk'

The "Transnational Action Against Child Trafficking" (TACT) project implemented by the Terre des hommes Foundation in Albania intended simultaneously to:

1. establish a relationship of trust between project staff and both children and their families in the Roma and Egyptian community; this meant, for example, avoiding being identified too closely with the police;
2. identify school-age children who were considered to be at relatively high risk of being trafficked, either because they had already dropped out of school and started work near home or elsewhere in Albania, or because their parents were reported to be planning to let them start work or to go abroad;
3. provide advice and material support to families with 'children at risk', identifying the incentives that traffickers offered to such families (loans and other payments) and offering in-kind income supplements to reduce the pressure to accept these incentives;
4. provide children at risk with extra tutoring so that they caught up with other pupils, enjoyed school more and were less inclined to drop out;
5. provide children with information about the experience of children who have been trafficked, not only in the Roma and Egyptian community but to all children in parts of the country from where children were being trafficked.

The TACT project went much further than simply identifying children in the Egyptian community in southern Albania as being at risk of being trafficked. It used classic social-protection techniques to assess which specific children in which specific communities were at highest risk and concentrated protection measures on these children. It was found that when a child dropped out of school it was the equivalent of an alarm bell warning that the child was about to be trafficked.

A series of social conditions was also found to define children as being at high risk of being trafficked:

- the households faced economic difficulties – in forty percent of cases neither parent was employed and in eighty percent at least one parent was unemployed;
- the families had a housing problem, usually sharing a single room even when the household had four or six members;
- parents had a low level of education – six percent of fathers and only three percent of mothers had finished the compulsory eight years of school in Albania;
- in one in four cases, the child's parents were no longer living together.

Source: Terre des hommes and Ndihmë për Fëmijët (NPF), Child trafficking in South Eastern Europe: The Development of Good Practices to Protect Albanian Children, 2005, page 10.

and what action might succeed in protecting them and preventing them from being trafficked. When the profile of children at risk of being trafficked is identified successfully, a range of protection techniques can be implemented.

One such example is the Transnational Action Against Child Trafficking (TACT) project implemented by the Terres des Hommes for children from the Egyptian community in Albania that is used here to assess the effectiveness of such initiatives. This project combined provision of information to children with efforts to prevent children from dropping out of school and provision of specific assistance to vulnerable children and families (see Box 6 for more details).

2.6 Stopping children at high risk from dropping out of school

The prevention work of the Terre des hommes Foundation and NPF in Albania found that, of the children identified as being at high risk of being trafficked, one third had fallen three years behind at school, while almost two thirds were more than a year behind. The organizations concluded that sometimes children dropped out for practical reasons, e.g., family poverty, lack of income, failure at school, and sometimes for cultural reasons, e.g., a history of not attending school linked to discrimination that Egyptian children experience at school.⁶⁹ In the first case, the NGOs could provide either material assistance to the household or assistance to a child to help him or her learn more effectively. For example, NPF took the lead in providing catch-up education and helping children who dropped out of school to restart. This included persuading school directors who were reluctant to reintegrate children out of concerns that these children would drop out again and further increase the drop-out statistics of a school.

Tackling the cultural reasons involved efforts to increase the value attributed by the families concerned to school education and thereby to influence their behaviour. For example, NPF organized vocational training for some children and provided them with money to start their own income-generating activities after leaving school. They also talked to other members of the child's household about issues that indirectly affected school participation, such as health and how to deal with officials.

⁶⁹ Terre des hommes and Ndihmë për Fëmijët, op. cit., page 24.

a) Income supplements for households and other assistance to enable parents to withstand pressures from traffickers

Terre des hommes and NPF provided in-kind support to deprived households with children assessed as being at 'high risk' from dropping out of school and being trafficked. This took the form of food, rather than money to ensure that resources went for the wellbeing of the whole family, especially the children.

All material assistance to families was made conditional on the child or children continuing to attend school. Terre des hommes and NPF felt this requirement established a reciprocal relationship between the NGOs and the families rather than a conventional patron-client relationship.⁷⁰

Both organizations entered this project aware that cash support might reduce efforts by adults in the household to seek work and that some families are likely to deliberately take their children out of school to become eligible for assistance. They were also aware that the impacts of receiving money may vary as some families are better at managing money for the benefit of the household and children than others. These concerns were taken into account when considering which families were best qualified for assistance.⁷¹

b) Effectiveness of the TACT project

According to the NGOs involved, the project helped prevent trafficking and re-trafficking of children that benefited from the project but also had other positive effects on the situation of these children (for example, increased access to education).⁷²

TACT is the only project in South Eastern Europe that had such a tight focus on a specific community and deployed a variety of targeted measures

⁷⁰ Terre des hommes and Ndihmë për Fëmijët, op. cit., pages 23 and 28.

⁷¹ Other lessons on how to administer income supplements to prevent the economic exploitation of children can be drawn from larger-scale schemes which have used this technique, e.g., the Programme for the Elimination of Child Labour ('PETI') in Brazil, which provided 'school scholarships' to the families of children who had dropped out and started work while still of compulsory school age.

⁷² By early 2005 1,323 Albanian children, including 165 that were earlier trafficked had benefited from the project, Terre des hommes Foundation (Albania), Transnational Action Against Child Trafficking (TACT), Peer Review (unpublished), April 2005, page 16.

to prevent children from being trafficked. Such a combination of strategies aimed at addressing some of the main causes for child trafficking among the Egyptian community was one of the main features of the project's success.

Furthermore, the ability of implementing organizations to gain and maintain the trust of the families they were assisting was vital for the project's success—a feature that was often missing in other initiatives addressed to vulnerable ethnic communities. Apart from the conditionality attached to eligibility for material assistance, mutual trust was gained by ensuring respect for commitments which were agreed and providing real incentives for children to stay in school by securing their subsequent employment. The latter was especially important in a country with a non functioning economy, where members of certain ethnic groups experience discrimination and high levels of unemployment.

However, the project was relatively expensive to run since NGOs had to employ their own social workers to identify children at risk, develop a relationship with individual families and provide in-kind support. This also meant that NGOs unintentionally (but consciously) created disincentives for state social and education services normally responsible for the protection of targeted children and their families to fulfil their obligations. This is often the case when it comes to NGO led initiatives. In this case, this was remedied in part by the training that Terre des hommes provided to social services staff concerning the implementation of measures to protect children at risk of dropping out of school or being trafficked, endorsed in the new Albanian National Strategy on Social Services.

2.7 Improving child protection systems

There is no shortage of good intentions to improve systems for protecting children from trafficking as witnessed in national action plans adopted at the national level. Some countries have plans specifically focused on child trafficking. For example, Romania's National Plan of Action for Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Children and for Social Reintegration of Victims (2004-2007) includes the intention to support families in difficult situations *especially* in areas of the country where a high number of child trafficking cases are reported. However, there has been little, if any, tangible progress in translating these plans into action at the local level.

This is due to many different reasons: lack of financial and human resources to implement the plans; inadequate coordination among different agencies and rapid changes in the institutions at the national level responsible for coordination; strong central planning and weak participation of local authorities and services in direct contact with the most vulnerable children; and competing priorities at local level that often give lower priority to the prevention of trafficking.

All this suggests that plans and approaches that focus narrowly on child trafficking might be less effective than plans intended to improve the performance of child protection services across the board. As noted earlier, many of the steps required to prevent child trafficking are similar to those needed to protect children from a wide range of other forms of abuse. Thus improvement of child protection systems, especially their ability to identify children's vulnerability at an early stage and to provide adequate protection measures and support services to child victims, may go a long way towards preventing child trafficking and protecting child victims.

Yet as seen in chapter 7, the child protection systems in South Eastern Europe have many weaknesses (see Table 1, chapter 7) and are failing to protect children from trafficking. There are also few initiatives to support reforms in the social protection systems of the countries of origin of children who are trafficked.

In this context, it was a sign of progress when the National Authority for Child Rights Protection in Romania decided during 2005 that, rather than having different strategies to respond to different forms of child exploitation in Romania, the Authority wanted a new inter-ministerial group to be set up to deal with *all* categories of child exploitation and related abuse—including trafficking, child labour and also domestic abuse and applications by children for refugee status.⁷³

UNICEF is also one of the actors that made the strengthening of child protection systems, in both preventive and protective measures, a cornerstone of its approach. This is being done partially through advocacy and technical support for the implementation of UNICEF's Guidelines for Protection of the Rights of Child Victims of Trafficking, and partially through other UNICEF's programmes aimed at strengthening protection for

⁷³ Interview with the programme director of Romania's National Authority for Child Rights Protection, September 2005.

children exposed to violence, abuse and exploitation, children in conflict with the law and those at risk or already deprived of parental care. One example of this approach is the recent Albanian National Strategy on Social Services developed with technical assistance from UNICEF, which includes provisions for protection of children from trafficking.

2.8 Ensuring adequate cooperation between agencies involved in anti-trafficking action at national level

Another approach to reinforcing preventive and protection measures focused on linking different agencies mandated to protect children from trafficking and providing a framework for a co-ordinated response through the establishment of National Referral Mechanisms (NRM). In all countries this included the establishment of either a National Committee or National Coordinator for Combating Human Trafficking, or, as in the Republic of Moldova, a subgroup for combating child trafficking.

So far NRMs have not been particularly attentive to the issue of prevention and have been weak in coordinating prevention activities. There are several potential reasons for this. Firstly, anti-trafficking activities in South Eastern Europe were predominantly focused on protection of adults and children who had already been trafficked. Secondly, each of the organizations involved in anti-trafficking efforts has its own priorities stemming from their mandate and expertise, resulting in a patchwork of mostly small-scale interventions rather than well-coordinated or extensive programmes. This problem is not overcome by the development of a national plan of action as different organizations still compete or have different views about what action is needed to implement the plan. This appeared to be the case in the UN Administered Province of Kosovo in late 2005 when different organizations launched separate media initiatives to inform the public about changes in patterns of trafficking in the UN Administered Province of Kosovo and the remedial action necessary.

Furthermore, National Referral Mechanisms are routinely coordinated by the Ministry of the Interior responsible for law enforcement. This means there may be a bias towards prevention strategies based on a law enforcement approach that do not address the social protection needs of children at risk of being trafficked.

2.9 Intercepting children who are being trafficked from one country to another at border crossings

There have been numerous initiatives in South Eastern Europe to tighten up procedures around children crossing borders.

In countries belonging to the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), such as the Republic of Moldova, children are still allowed to cross national borders without a passport. Moldovan children used to be able to travel to Ukraine and the Russian Federation with only their birth certificate. As these contained no photograph or other personal details, they provided no guarantee that the child named on the certificate was the one who was travelling. One of the Moldovan children interviewed for this Report said that her traffickers showed border guards a different child's birth certificate and were consequently allowed to take her out of the Republic of Moldova. Save the Children (Moldova) called for a change in the law and at the end of 2004 it became obligatory for children to have a formal identity card when visiting other CIS countries.⁷⁴

In Romania children who leave their country unaccompanied by either parent are supposed to carry a letter of authorization signed by their parent and duly confirmed by a notary public. In theory this should enable immigration officials at Romanian border points to check that children have parental consent to leave the country. In practice the effort and cost of having a letter confirmed by a notary public is a disincentive to using this protection measure. Border guards in Romania are reported to be urged on a regular basis to ignore this requirement, again undermining the potential benefits of such letters as a prevention measure. However, it does sometimes work. Romanian border guards are reported to have intercepted an adolescent girl being taken via Hungary for commercial sexual exploitation in Austria when she was found to have no letter of permission to travel from her parents.⁷⁵

Since 2002 Romanian children do not need a visa to enter Schengen Agreement⁷⁶ countries in Europe.

⁷⁴ Interview with the director of Save the Children (Republic of Moldova), 1 October 2005.

⁷⁵ Case reported by the Coordinator of the Centre for Assistance and Reintegration of Child Victims of Trafficking in Satu Mare, Romania, September 2005.

⁷⁶ A total of 15 countries have entered into the Schengen agreement: Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Holland, Iceland, Italy, Luxembourg, Norway, Portugal, Spain and Sweden.

This has made it easier for Romanian children to travel to these countries—and many had travelled to France before they could do so legally—and likewise easier for traffickers to take adolescents to France, Spain, Italy and other EU countries.

Child rights organizations in Bulgaria and Romania are not reported to have called for the reintroduction of visas or other checks at borders to protect children. However, in view of the vast disparities in income between households in countries on track to join the EU (Bulgaria and Romania) and those in Western Europe, large numbers of vulnerable children are likely to continue travelling to EU countries. Some and maybe many will end up being exploited unless more efforts are made at the frontiers of Bulgaria, Romania and EU countries to check the age of young travellers and to clarify whether they have their parents' authorization to travel abroad.

Furthermore, inadequate efforts are made to put in place systems to monitor what happens to children once they enter a country, especially the Schengen states. This monitoring may help protect children if and when they are exploited. One positive exception is the United Kingdom. In this country, immigration officials are required to fill in a special form whenever an unaccompanied child arrives at a border post. This is used to record basic information about the child, his or her identity documents and details about their intended itinerary. The form is also used to record details about anyone who meets the child or who is scheduled to receive them. A copy of the form is forwarded to the relevant child welfare or social services department in the area where the child is scheduled to be going so that she or he can receive a follow-up visit and assessment by a social worker.⁷⁷ This technique is not effective when false information is provided, but if a child cannot be located subsequently, it is still important as it triggers efforts to locate the child.

3. Strategies on the 'demand side'

3.1 Deterrence by prosecution

A law enforcement strategy to detect and stop human trafficking appears to be quite straightforward. It would involve: (1) amending crimi-

nal codes and other related laws to bring them in line with the provisions of the UN Trafficking Protocol; (2) redefining what the offence of trafficking involves and increasing the penalties; (3) equipping law enforcement agents such as police and border guards with equipment and training to detect trafficking and secure evidence; and (4) bringing traffickers to court and, if convicted, sending them to prison.

In practice, it is difficult to implement this strategy (especially points 3 and 4) effectively, for several reasons. Firstly, it is often difficult to distinguish children who are being trafficked from other children who are on the move. To identify child victims, law enforcement and police officials need a good understanding of the patterns and techniques that traffickers use. It is also important that they are aware that it is irrelevant whether trafficked children have been subjected to coercion or deception during their recruitment; in contrast to adults, children who have been subjected to exploitation should always be treated as children and as victims of trafficking. This means that trafficked children should not be mistaken for illegal immigrants or criminals.

Secondly, taking evidence from children is very sensitive as it must be done without causing them further harm. Indeed, at every stage, law enforcement strategies have to ensure that the best interests of the child are a primary consideration. This means ensuring that the procedures used for children who are victims or witnesses are as child friendly as possible. It may mean refraining from involving them in legal cases if it seems likely to re-traumatize the child or put her or him at unacceptable risk of reprisals from traffickers or their associates. However, the experience from South Eastern Europe shows weaknesses in overall protection measures for children who are victims or witnesses in criminal cases, including during the process of questioning and taking evidence.

Thirdly, for this strategy to give results it is not just a question of whether criminals who have trafficked children are prosecuted and convicted. It is also important that such prosecutions result in key criminals being imprisoned and entire networks being dismantled so that trafficking chains are broken up and the incentives for prospective traffickers dashed. In many cases prosecutions have involved minor players in trafficking networks, who are swiftly replaced by others.

The results of trials are also important for this strategy to be effective. When sentences are so light that a trafficker is free before the child who

⁷⁷ Details on 'Operation Paladin' from a press release issued by the UK National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, 17 May 2004.

has been abused has recovered from her or his ordeal, they not only fail to prevent trafficking but also put children at risk of traffickers' revenge. This was the case of a Kosovar girl who was abducted at the age of 15 and forced into prostitution in 2002 and who testified against the pimp who exploited her; he was convicted and sentenced to two and a half years in prison. Just as she was rebuilding her life and relations with others, the pimp was released from prison and took his revenge by ordering her boyfriend to be beaten up. The combination of a short sentence and inadequate police protection contributed to her being subjected to yet more harm.⁷⁸

3.2 Reducing demand—the income on which traffickers depend

Strategies that address the people whose money ends up in the hands of traffickers, have had very varied results. A specific set of tactics employed in the UN Administered Province of Kosovo reduced the exploitation of trafficked adult women and some girls, while a campaign in Greece helped reduce donations of money to trafficked children who were begging on the street.

a) Barriers to challenging demand for commercial sex

Between 2001 and 2003 the UN Interim Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK) took steps to reduce the commercial sexual exploitation of trafficked women and girls. UNMIK Regulation 2001/4 made it a crime to use or procure “the sexual services of a person with the knowledge that that person is a victim of trafficking in persons.” The regulation provides for sentences of up to 10 years' imprisonment if the person trafficked was less than 18 years of age; and 5 years in the case of an adult.⁷⁹ However, in practice, the difficulty of proving that men or boys paying for commercial sex were aware that the women involved had been trafficked makes it hard to turn arrests into prosecutions and prosecutions into convictions.

UNMIK also developed a list of bars and premises where it was suspected that prostitution was occurring. These places were declared off-limits to individuals employed by UNMIK and to for-

eign military personnel. Although this strategy was aimed at curbing the demand for commercial sex in general, it is widely regarded as having led to a reduction in the numbers of women and girls trafficked into the UN Administered Province of Kosovo. Thus, in some situations, where there is enough evidence to show that a high proportion of the women and girls providing commercial sex have been trafficked, the action to curb all forms of commercial sex as a measure against trafficking might be justified.

Campaigns to reduce ‘demand’ in the context of commercial sexual exploitation might also be useful if they are clear about their aims and targets and if it can be proved that they led to a change in the behaviour of those targeted. This has not been the case in the South Eastern Europe. In the UN Administered Province of Kosovo, IOM organized an information campaign about victims of trafficking, aimed principally at men from overseas who were working in the UN Administered Province of Kosovo. The campaign slogan was: “You pay for her for a night: she pays with her life.” Save the Children in the UN Administered Province of Kosovo also organized a campaign in 2003 to influence men and boys who paid for commercial sex and to make the general public aware that Kosovar girls and women, not just girls and women from other countries, were being trafficked. The NGO reckoned that the message could change behaviours on the demand side. Two years later, publicity campaigns were organized in late 2005 with much the same message, suggesting that it did not have the desired effect the first time around.

Both law enforcement strategies and supporting information campaigns that aim to discourage men and boys from paying for sex sound as though they *should* be able to impact demand. However, their message fails to highlight the principle that adolescents under age 18 should never be involved in providing commercial sex. Furthermore, not enough evidence has been collected to know how the men and boys targeted respond. Some evidence from other regions indicates that men or boys who pay for sex will refuse to do so if they are aware that it involves a girl who has been trafficked.⁸⁰ However, recent research in South Asia showed that clients paying for sex did not consider 17-year-olds to be ‘children’. In many parts of Europe, popular perceptions are not yet in line with the CRC and 16- and 17-year-olds are seen as young adults rather than children.

⁷⁸ Interview in the UN Administered Province of Kosovo, September 2005.

⁷⁹ UNMIK Regulation 2001/4 on the Prohibition of Trafficking in Persons in the UN Administered Province of Kosovo, (12 January 2001), Section 4 (Using or Procuring Sexual Services of Person in a Situation of Sexual Exploitation).

⁸⁰ See Terre des hommes, A study of trafficked Nepalese girls and women in Mumbai and Kolkata, India (summary of findings), October 2005.

b) Reducing donations to trafficked beggars

When Albanian children first appeared on the streets of Thessalonica and other Greek cities in the late 1990s, washing car windscreens to earn money, child rights organizations in Greece were unsure how to respond. In particular, they did not know whether the children were indeed desperate and in need of charity to survive. A Greek NGO, ARSIS, responded by setting up a drop-in centre for these street children and began to collect information about their circumstances. ARSIS learned from Terre des hommes in Albania that the children were victims of trafficking and set about influencing policy makers in Greece as well as city officials, police, prosecutors and social services.

It was some years before ARSIS concluded that it would be in the children's best interests to cut the supply of money upon which the traffickers depended—the money which the Greek public donated to children who washed their windscreens and later begged outside churches, played music and sold flowers and other articles to people in restaurants. This meant telling the public that the children were being exploited and suggesting they would be better off without donations.

ARSIS targeted its messages: “Don't give money to children in the streets.” “You don't help children in the streets by giving them money.” The awareness campaign explained that the children were being abused but did not go into detail about trafficking. The message dealt with the moment of contact between members of the public and the begging child. ARSIS enlisted the support of journalists in getting the message across, particularly once members of the public expressed concern that the children might be punished by their controllers if their earnings fell.⁸¹ In 2004 the campaign was re-oriented to deal with the concern of both ARSIS and Terre des hommes that Albanian children might be trafficked to Greece in large numbers to beg during the Olympic Games.

The number of Albanian children begging in Thessalonica and other Greek cities has fallen considerably. It seems likely that this is for several different reasons, possibly including the campaign to reduce donations, although further research would be needed to determine the real impact of the campaign.

⁸¹ Information from ARSIS staff in Thessalonica, November 2003, and Tirana, May 2005.

c) Regulating the employment of young people in the informal sector and in sectors known to practice forced labour

Several EU countries have made efforts to stop migrant workers being trafficked and subjected to forced labour. The UK adopted a new law in 2004, the Gangmasters (Licensing) Act, to regulate the activities of the employment agencies which were believed to be responsible for the worst excesses. The law creates a compulsory licensing system for gangmasters and other agencies supplying workers for agricultural activities, gathering shellfish and related processing and packaging activities. The legislation was proposed after 23 migrant cockle collectors were drowned by rising tides in a well-publicized incident in 2004 that raised the issue of whether the workers and other migrants were victims of forced labour.⁸²

Other sectors in which trafficked children have been made to work in the UK, such as domestic work, remain largely unregulated. In most of the countries which are destinations for children trafficked from South Eastern Europe, there are still sectors of the economy which are largely unregulated and where children can be exploited for financial gain. Despite recent initiatives at the international level to prohibit the exploitation associated with trafficking and the ‘worst forms of child labour’,⁸³ along with renewed efforts to stop the use of forced labour, many industrialized countries in which these practices have been reported have been relatively slow to act.

d) Investigating job offers to find out if they are genuine

Setting up telephone help lines was one of the strategies applied to help young people find out more about job offers abroad. For example, over half the requests which one such hotline operated by La Strada in the Republic of Moldova received in the first two years of the hotline's operation (2001-2003) were about employment abroad. There were a smaller number of inquiries about working as a domestic *au pair* and marriage abroad.⁸⁴ Only a

⁸² Temporary Labour Working Group (Ethical Trading Initiative), A licence to operate. New measures to tackle exploitation of temporary workers in the UK agricultural industry, 2004.

⁸³ The ‘worst forms of child labour’ were defined by Convention No 182 (the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention), adopted by the ILO in 1999.

⁸⁴ Out of a total of 11,027 calls. La Strada (Republic of Moldova), “Hot Line Statistics. Calls breakdown by issue. September 1, 2001-September 1, 2003.” Accessed 5 October 2005 at: <http://www.lastrada.md>

small proportion of inquiries come from children: during 2004, just under 4% of the calls were from adolescents under age 18.⁸⁵ Hotline staff are reported to make suggestions about how to distinguish between offers of acceptable jobs and deceptive offers that may be a trap.

Branches of La Strada in other countries such as the Ukraine have also reported increases in the number of telephone callers asking how to assess job offers abroad. This suggests that countries with high rates of emigration have a responsibility to ensure that good advice and support is available for young people thinking of emigrating to get work. Some standard advice can be offered to all young people seeking work abroad (see below), along with lists of examples of job offers that have proved to be covers for attempts to force migrants into some form of exploitation.

4. Cross-cutting strategies

4.1 Child participation

Efforts to prevent child trafficking have involved children in passing information and advice to other children, e.g., as peer-to-peer educators, but have not otherwise developed imaginative ways of enabling children to participate. Information from children has been taken into account at the design stage, but the level of detail and the extent to which the information supplied by children is taken into account has varied a great deal. Even when trafficked children have been interviewed about their experiences, too little attention has been given to documenting their experiences and knowledge of possible risks before they were trafficked.

Future initiatives could give more attention to involving children in prevention efforts in order to enhance their overall effectiveness.

4.2 Cooperation between organizations based at different ends of the trafficking chain

The experience in South Eastern Europe and other parts of the world suggests that efforts to prevent child trafficking have benefited enormously from coordination between the areas where children

are recruited and those where the same children are exploited. This was especially the case for fact-finding investigations and follow-up counter-trafficking initiatives. This proves the need for separate organizations to systematically work together to prevent child trafficking, within one country, bilaterally (in countries of recruitment and exploitation), or across the region. There are examples of cooperation at all three of these levels.

1. Within a single country: in Albania, six NGOs set up a coalition in 2001 called së Bashku Kundër Trafikimit të Fëmijëve (BKTF), All Together against Child Trafficking. It had nine member NGOs by the end of 2003 which continue to work separately but have coordinated activities on several occasions, e.g., responding in 2003 to a new government draft strategy on child trafficking.
2. Bilaterally, between an area of recruitment and an area of exploitation: the Terre des hommes Foundation and NPF in Albania developed good working relations with ARSIS in Greece.
3. Save the Children's Regional Programme against Child Trafficking in South Eastern Europe brought together six countries in its first phase and seven in its second phase which began in September 2005.

There have been various examples of government agencies in areas of 'supply' and areas of 'demand' establishing direct contact and improving their impact as a result. On the whole, however, making connections between areas of 'supply' and 'demand' remains difficult to organize. In particular, governments and government agencies in separate countries have found it more difficult to work together closely than have NGOs. For several years the Stability Pact (for South Eastern Europe) Task Force on Trafficking in Human Beings worked systematically to encourage cooperation between SEE countries⁸⁶ but similar cooperation between SEE and EU countries has proved difficult to bring about. Bilateral agreements between the countries might be very useful for inter-country cooperation. However,

⁸⁵ 197 out of 4,987 calls. Information from the La Strada (Republic of Moldova) coordinator, September 2005.

⁸⁶ The Task Force wound up in 2004. Its web site explained that it existed "to encourage and strengthen co-operation between the countries of South Eastern Europe as well as to streamline existing efforts in the combat against human trafficking". <http://www.stabilitypact.org/trafficking/default.asp>

for such agreements to be effective in preventing re-trafficking, they must include clear protection standards for victims of trafficking. The recently signed agreement between Greece and Albania is the first one that includes clear standards for the protection of children, such as issuing residence permits to children-victims, referral of child victims to competent officials, appointment of a temporary guardian, individual case assessment in determining durable solutions, etc.⁸⁷

4.3 The advantages of organizations providing assistance to trafficked children also implementing prevention initiatives

Organizations which work on the issue of child trafficking may focus exclusively on prevention or combine prevention work with other activities such as providing practical assistance to children who have been trafficked. Organizations providing assistance to children who have already been trafficked have some advantages when it comes to designing prevention initiatives. Their day-to-day contact with trafficked children gives them direct access to information about the children's experience, as well as the ways in which previous attempts to prevent trafficking have affected such children. In contrast, other organizations rely on second-hand information or on general reports that do not reveal all the salient details. When trying out a new strategy (or combination of strategies), rapid feedback from trafficked children as the initiative develops enables an organization to introduce the modifications which may be necessary to make it effective.

4.4 Coordinating several strategies simultaneously

It is clear by now that effective prevention initiatives usually combine several of the strategies and ensure some coordination of efforts in areas of 'supply' with those in areas of 'demand'. One general conclusion is that efforts to make children aware of the risks of being trafficked are unlikely to be sufficient by themselves and can only be justified as a temporary measure. A second conclusion is that there is no single recipe of how to combine strategies.

⁸⁷ Agreement between the Government of the Hellenic Republic and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Albania for the protection and assistance of children victims of trafficking, 27 February 2006.

4.5 Sustainability: how to pass an NGO practice over to public social services

Overall, NGOs cannot and should not replace the obligations of governments to protect children. This implies that NGOs should work in close collaboration with public authorities. Most NGOs would say they are doing so, although with varying degrees of success.

For example, in the case of Albania, the country's Parliament approved a Law on Social Services in March 2004 that created a framework for the reform of the country's social protection system. This was followed by the adoption of a National Strategy on Social Services that was developed with technical assistance from UNICEF. These events created an expectation that the state's own social services will soon be able to protect children at risk of dropping out of school or being trafficked. To support this process, Terres des Hommes staff in Albania organized a seminar jointly with social services staff in May 2005 to start enabling social services to actively engage in anti-trafficking efforts.

4.6 Preventing trafficking while challenging discrimination against a minority

The most controversial projects to prevent trafficking in South Eastern Europe have been those which focus on children belonging to Roma or Egyptian minorities, particularly when the people making money out of the children belong to the same communities. Criticism of the projects has been voiced by members of the minorities concerned. They have challenged the accuracy of the research data that identified children from these minorities as being trafficked in disproportionate numbers and objected to the way that non-Roma organizations have been put in charge of projects focusing on Roma children.⁸⁸

Initiatives concerning children belonging to these minorities, whether intended to stop trafficking or other forms of exploitation, or even 'cultural practices' such as early marriage or withdrawing children from school to start work before completing their primary education, all have to contend with the high levels of discrimination that

⁸⁸ See Rut Feuk, Assessment Trip to Albania on Trafficking in Children from Roma and Egyptian Communities, Report, 16 - 21 June 2003, ODIHR and OSCE Contact Point for Roma and Sinti Issues (CPRS).

these minorities have experienced throughout Europe for many centuries and have to ensure that their interventions contribute to combating discrimination rather than reinforcing prejudice. Initiatives designed specifically to prevent Roma or Egyptian children⁸⁹ from being trafficked should consequently be analysed alongside other initiatives to prevent their economic exploitation and to enable children from minority groups to exercise their human rights.

One general conclusion is that any organization that intends to combat trafficking that involves Roma or Egyptian children should build links with the community concerned from the outset and invest in developing methods which involve members of the community as much as possible—even if this is difficult.

5. Some prevention strategies from other regions/countries that might be relevant for the SEE region

5.1 Community-based protection networks

On the whole, less priority has been given in South Eastern Europe to mobilizing resources at the community level—unlike other parts of the world, such as South-East Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa, where ‘community level protection networks’ have been set up to try and prevent trafficking or related forms of abuse, such as domestic violence and child labour, or behaviour that is considered likely to lead to abuse, such as children dropping out of school. In communities where children have been recruited especially to take part as combatants in armed conflict or to earn money for others in prostitution, networks of this sort have been set up specifically to prevent local children from being recruited and trafficked.⁹⁰

The composition of protection networks varies, as do the tasks they perform. In parts of South-East Asia, village volunteers are involved in iden-

tifying children and young people considered to be ‘at risk’ and providing them with various forms of support. The theory sounds good but in practice some protection networks have ended up abusing child rights, for example by imposing blanket bans on children leaving their home community—because the village leaders failed to distinguish between trafficking and other forms of migration.

Although no special networks are reported to have been established in countries in South Eastern Europe, most local communities have professional people who could participate in a network, such as school teachers, health workers and the police. Even in the absence of social workers, in many communities these professionals already share information about children dropping out of school or showing signs of neglect or physical abuse. When someone takes the initiative to convene these professionals on a systematic basis within a community, a ‘multi-disciplinary team’ comes into existence which may also act as a community-based protection network.

In the capital of the Republic of Moldova, Chişinău, for example, the ‘Amicul’ Centre for the Prevention of Child Abuse is reported to act as convenor for such a network, holding meetings every two months for representatives of both national authorities (such as the Procuracy), international organizations (like the IOM) and the city’s own child protection authority. This model could potentially be replicated at provincial or local level, although this has not yet occurred in the Republic of Moldova and even in Chişinău it has proved difficult to persuade representatives of all the relevant organizations to attend.

Some key elements for any protection network include:

1. some form of coordination, either by one of the professionals or by a community leader;
2. knowledge of what reaction is appropriate when a child is reported to be experiencing abuse or is believed to be at risk—a reaction which must protect a child rather than making her or his situation worse in any way;
3. ensuring the privacy and the confidentiality of any information that is circulated about individual children.

⁸⁹ Although the situation of Roma, Egyptians and Ashkali is often presented as if it was similar, no evidence has been published to indicate that Ashkali children have been trafficked.

⁹⁰ For example, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (to prevent recruitment of child soldiers) and in Cambodia (to prevent children being recruited for commercial sexual exploitation).

5.2 Enabling older children to migrate safely—risk minimization strategies

In much of South Eastern Europe, current rates of emigration are so high that between 10-20% of all young people aged between 18 and 25 are likely to seek work abroad. In this situation it seems sensible to provide *all* young people with basic information about how to avoid being subjected to abuse including trafficking and other sorts of abuse. As some youth leave the country before they reach 18, waiting until they are adults to provide such information is too late. Furthermore, schools offer a unique opportunity to reach virtually all the adolescent population: once they have left school there is no equivalent opportunity.

However, the issue of ‘safe migration’ is often mentioned in anti-trafficking initiatives but interpreted to mean a variety of things. Governments and intergovernmental organizations usually assume it refers to *legal* migration, moving to jobs for which people have already applied and been accepted before they leave one country for another. Job seekers in South Eastern Europe are aware that far more openings exist in other countries than the ones they can find out about at home, so they often do not regard legal migration as the most viable option.

There are also different interpretations of what ‘safe migration’ means for both older adolescents and young adults. This means giving advice on how to check whether advertisements and job offers abroad are genuine and tips on what to do to minimize the chances of being trafficked and abused. In this case, it means giving young people information about what trafficking is and how traffickers work so that they will deliberately adopt methods that reduce their chances of being entrapped. Governments may not be happy with this approach because they want all migration to be legal and controlled. However, such advice may enable young people to protect themselves more effectively than if they are provided with no advice.

a) Standard precautions to advise young migrants to take

NGOs involved in efforts to prevent trafficking of adolescents and young adults in Latvia developed a series of recommendations for young people who were considering trying to earn money abroad. These were tips on how to ensure jobs were legitimate, as well as tips which might help if someone ended up in trouble (see Box 7).

The problem with this approach is that it is not foolproof. It is likely to reduce the chances of someone being trafficked and to improve their

Box 7: IOFA advice to young people thinking of migrating abroad

In Latvia the **International Organization for Adolescents (IOFA)** ran an anti-trafficking campaign targeted at adolescents and young adults. Here is its checklist of things to do to protect against false job promises abroad:

1. verify whether a job agency or opportunity is legitimate;
2. ask for an employment contract;
3. have someone review a contract and comment on it;
4. review and sign a contract for employment;
5. leave a copy of the contract with relatives or friends;
6. leave a copy of a passport with relatives or friends;
7. leave contact information with relatives or friends;
8. leave the employer’s contact information with relatives/friends;
9. create a password/code language to let people know, “I’m in trouble”;
10. attend to a career counselling session at a youth centre.

Source: A. Boak, A. Boldosser and O. Biu, *Smooth Flight: A Guide to Preventing Youth Trafficking*, IOFA, 2003, page 95.

chances of escaping from the clutches of traffickers. However, a 17-year-old who follows all the advice above might still be captured by traffickers and complain subsequently that the advice was inadequate or even that on the basis of the advice she or he ended up in trouble. This risk is not a reason for failing to give young people advice, but clearly any advice needs to be accompanied by a clear explanation that the techniques suggested are not foolproof.

b) Documenting the circumstances in which children depart and tracing them

Some rural communities in South-East Asia in which there is a high level of emigration have introduced techniques for monitoring children's departures and emigration in order to track what happens to them. Instead of assessing which children are at high risk of being trafficked before their departure, this option involves assessing the level of risk to them when they depart (or just afterwards) on the basis of the information that relatives or others have about the child's intentions and travel plans.⁹¹ On this basis, it is possible to assess whether the child's departure is risky; if it is, attempts are made to seek information about the child in a systematic way afterwards, mainly from organizations based in the country or countries to which the child is believed to be travelling. Once again, for this strategy to succeed, agencies based in several different countries have to agree to participate in a network.

Transport workers face the same difficulties as others in trying to distinguish between children who are migrating in relatively safe conditions and those who are under the control of traffickers, especially if the traffickers are not actually accompanying them. There is a risk that transport workers, like members of community protection networks, will be overzealous and report on every child and adolescent who is travelling, rather than recognizing the tell-tale signs of trafficking.

5.3 Telling intermediaries about trafficking and recruiting them to help identify and intercept trafficked children

In various regions outside Europe efforts have been made to recruit people who come into contact with traffickers or trafficked children along trafficking routes. The aim is both to identify children who are being trafficked and to help intercept them. In Nepal, for example, transport workers have been recruited to report when they suspect that children whom they encounter are being trafficked: bus and taxi drivers, cart owners and others who provide transport for Nepali children travelling to India.

⁹¹ Information from UNICEF/UNIAP (United Nations Inter-Agency Project on Human Trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region), TRACE (Trafficking from Community to Exploitation) Project document, 12 May 2003.

The recommendations made here have first in mind government officials and public-sector authorities across South Eastern Europe, especially those responsible for social protection and child protection. Some of the recommendations focus on the ‘demand’ side of trafficking outside the SEE region and are aimed at child protection agencies and policy makers in EU States, as well as those in the Russian Federation and Turkey.

The recommendations are also relevant for donors that finance anti-trafficking initiatives and organizations that carry them out, e.g., intergovernmental organizations, international and local NGOs, government agencies and departments, national referral mechanisms and child protection agencies at national and local levels.

1. Improve the collection and analysis of data about children who have been trafficked

This Report emphasizes the importance of debriefing children, systematically and sensitively, who have been trafficked in regards to their experience—both those who return home and those who remain in the place or country of destination.

The information typically gathered in current post-trafficking interviews with police, psychologists and others, is collected to see whether criminal charges are justified and possible and does not try to elicit information about the causes of trafficking. Thus, specific research to assess risks and vulnerabilities to trafficking and their causes should also be conducted.

Good prevention initiatives need to build upon detailed and specific information provided by trafficked children but also by others directly involved or affected by trafficking. Donors should request such evidence in programme proposals and should not be satisfied with prevention initiatives based on general statistics about trafficking in the region. They should scrutinise proposals

to see that the design reflects both this primary evidence and a solid understanding of the broader causes of trafficking. Project design should also provide for incorporating feedback during the implementation stage.

2. Be ahead of trafficking: ‘go to where the children are’

A 2001 IPEC evaluation of initiatives designed to stop child trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children emphasized that there was a need to go “where the children are” rather than trying to do anti-trafficking work out of an office.⁹² NGOs concerned with trafficked children working on the street have also stressed the importance of ‘street work’, e.g., deploying social workers to contact children on the streets and to observe what is happening around these children.

The Terre des hommes Foundation and NPF coined the phrase “strategic parallelism” to describe what they consider a vital technique. The term means that the work of anti-trafficking organizations should both shadow and anticipate the work of traffickers—and the trafficked—so that there is at least a counterbalance to the lures that lead to being trafficked and better yet, a proactive and preventive action. Strategic parallelism means that anti-trafficking initiatives neither place nor accept geographical limits on their area of operation, i.e., they get involved both at the recruitment and exploitation ends of the trafficking chain and anywhere in between. It means working in a network of like-minded organizations, just as traffickers work in networks. It means securing the trust of children and children’s parents or family members and convincing them that the ultimate outcome is a material benefit accruing to them.⁹³

⁹² IPEC, “Action against Trafficking and Sexual Exploitation of Children. Going where the Children are...: An Evaluation of ILO-IPEC Programmes in Thailand, Philippines, Colombia, Costa Rica and Nicaragua.” 2001.

⁹³ Terre des hommes and Ndihamë për Fëmijët, op. cit., page 7.

Understanding the tactics used by traffickers has important implications for the design of preventive initiatives. However, there are also limitations. For example, government agencies and NGOs have to respect national borders. There are also barriers to cooperation between countries with more resources and poorer countries. It is essential that governments and organizations in destination countries address the causes of trafficking that reside with them, and extend appropriate protection to victims of trafficking and, in the case of children, ensure durable solutions are identified and implemented. UNICEF's Guidelines to Protect the Rights of Child Victims of Trafficking outline the minimum standards to be observed in dealing with child victims of trafficking from the identification phase to the implementation of durable solutions.

3. Make information campaigns more strategic

This Report has emphasized the need for information campaigns to be tailored to the audience or area that they target, rather than being 'off the shelf' or a straight re-application of an awareness strategy used elsewhere. A good information campaign has to apply good programme logic, collect and analyse information and demonstrate how a course of action can reasonably be expected to provoke the changes which are sought, i.e., influencing the behaviour of children and their parents/relatives in such a way that they will not be trafficked or are less likely to be trafficked.

Likewise, the efforts to reduce demand should be targeted more strategically. For example, the experience of ARSIS in Greece has shown that the public can be influenced to stop donating money to child beggars who have been trafficked. In contrast, messages given to men and boys who pay for sex need further refinement in terms of targeting a more specific audience with a clear message. Countries that consider commercial sex unacceptable in any circumstances, such as Sweden, do have a clear message but lack a special focus on the plight of girls and women who have been trafficked into the commercial sex sector.

In countries where some categories of commercial sex are regarded as acceptable or tolerable (or impossible to eradicate), efforts to discourage men and boys from paying for sex with adoles-

cents under 18 and with anyone who has been trafficked should be more carefully targeted and monitored. Rather than starting with nation-wide campaigns it might be more effective for authorities at national or local levels to formulate a variety of different messages and then test them on a pilot basis in order to evaluate their different impacts. Then those that work the best could be scaled up or applied in similar circumstances.

Furthermore, the exploitation of trafficked children has repeatedly been facilitated because consumers, clients, employers, law enforcement officials and members of the general public have not realized that activities in which they see children involved (particularly foreign children) are abusive—or have not known what an appropriate reaction would be. Thus, providing clear information to both children and adults on what constitutes child abuse and what to do about it when it occurs is crucial. One way of doing this is through specially designed campaigns aimed towards law enforcement officials and the general public.

4. Put life skills education in every classroom

Life skills education has been recognized as having many benefits, including reducing the vulnerability of children to being trafficked. However, many children in regions with high rates of child trafficking are still not being taught these skills. While this is partly because of resource constraints and the time it takes to introduce new topics into the school curriculum, in several cases there has been vocal opposition to its introduction. In such cases, those responsible for the delays should be held accountable for indirectly allowing the abuse of children to continue unchecked.

In addition to life skills education, it might be also necessary to design complementary and locally sensitive education campaigns, especially in areas with potentially high risk for abuse and exploitation of children.

5. Develop effective child protection systems

Preventing children from being trafficked requires strong child protection systems, especially in areas where disproportionate numbers of chil-

dren are known to have been trafficked. Research into the destination/exploitation of trafficked children typically reveals that authorities responsible for child protection in the places of origin were unaware of the children's recruitment and emigration.

Governments in all SEE countries must make it clear that protecting children is their priority. All of these countries have begun to implement reforms to their child protection systems. In general, reforms are aiming to transform existing systems and establish a 'continuum of services' to prevent, identify, report, refer, address/treat and provide services to children at risk of being trafficked and their families. UNICEF child protection programmes in South Eastern Europe are actively contributing to the development of this continuum of services.

Nevertheless, more decisive political commitment and additional resources are needed to make and manage the necessary changes. Governments in South Eastern Europe can make a difference by increasing budgets for social services, clearly defining the mandates and accountabilities of agencies, promoting communication and cooperation among different stakeholders, and ensuring greater participation of children and their families.

Cash assistance is generally available to families in need but the targeting could be improved to reach children and families at evident risk of trafficking directly. For example, income support could be extended on the condition that a child attends school until the end of compulsory education. Establishing eligibility would require social workers to spend more time assessing individual families and acquiring new skills. This approach might require more social workers than the numbers currently employed in each of the countries in South Eastern Europe, as well as the establishment of a community-based information system to identify and report on cases where children drop out of school or appear likely to do so.

Improvements are also needed to the parts of the child protection system responsible for checking that children crossing borders are not being trafficked. The same goes for the parts of the system charged with identifying trafficked children in areas where they are exploited. The improvements in child protection systems are not just relevant for countries of origin but also transit and destination countries to identify trafficked children in a timely way and ensure adequate care and protection. In addition, child protection agencies in

countries of origin, transit and destination need to establish better collaboration mechanisms. Bilateral agreements between States concerning trafficking of children and other unaccompanied children are one way of improving such cooperation. However, alternative frameworks to allow close exchange of information, including intelligence about patterns of child trafficking, are also needed.

6. Make sure programmes respect 'good practice'

This report has highlighted the importance of rooting prevention initiatives in child rights principles and provisions, good quality data and analysis, programme logic, monitoring and evaluating practices and measuring progress towards the expected results.

All prevention efforts, at minimum, should be designed to uphold the best interests of trafficked children, respect their privacy, ensure that rights of all trafficked children are respected without discrimination, and ensure children's views and comments are taken into account. They should be based on good quality, up-to-date and reliable data on risks and patterns of trafficking as well as existing protection mechanisms and services and their shortcomings. Having such data is crucial to understanding the causes of trafficking and predicting what the impact of specific activities devised to address the causes is likely to be. So, establishing these links clearly is a basis for designing good prevention initiatives. In many respects, it is better to focus on modest results, achievable through planned prevention activities, rather than hoping for results that depend on factors that cannot be influenced by the planned intervention.

Furthermore, each separate prevention initiative should be evaluated and its impact assessed, while findings should be widely and actively shared with other stakeholders in child protection.

Most donor organizations are aware of the need for evaluation and impact assessment and are willing to provide financing for these phases of a counter-trafficking project. Donors could also make the inclusion of an evaluation a condition of financing.

Lessons about the effectiveness of individual initiatives to prevent child trafficking are likely to

remain relevant long after the specific pattern of trafficking that was targeted has come to an end. Countries such as the Czech Republic and Poland, which were areas of recruitment for women and girls being trafficked into the EU in the 1990s, have since become both transit points and destinations for trafficking victims.

Economic and social conditions—and their impact on trafficking—may change in individual countries, but the opportunities that traffickers identify and exploit rarely disappear on their own. They, too, just change shape. Consequently, the need to prevent trafficking and the exploitation of children is ongoing.