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The added value of Protective Accompaniment.



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Terre des hommes is the leading Swiss organisation for child relief. Founded in 1960, Terre des hommes helps to build a better future for disadvantaged children and their communities, with an innovative approach and practical, sustainable solutions. Active in more than 30 countries, Tdh develops and implements field projects to allow a better daily life for over 1.4 million children and their close relatives, particularly in the domains of health care and protection. This engagement is financed by individual and institutional support, of which 85% flows directly into the programs of Tdh.

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Summary.

Protective accompaniment is the approach Tdh applies and promotes in its work with child victims and/or at risk of trafficking, exploitation and abuse. It involves supporting children whilst working alongside them. Tdh has so far mainly applied this

approach when working with children on the move, which is why this document focuses on this category of children, more specifically those found in a context of labour migration, one of the main reasons behind the movement of children in West Africa.

Protective Accompaniment means:

- Staying alongside children to help reduce the risks they face, to help them be actors, access their rights, ensure that their best interests is respected and that assistance is provided to all victims identified.
- Supporting and protecting all children on the move, throughout their journeys by ensuring the effective existence of formal and informal services at all stages along the route (setting up mechanisms of protective accompaniment).
- Guaranteeing the participation of the children and their family and/or community in the analysis of the children's situation, in seeking protective solutions guaranteeing at best their rights, and in implementing the solutions identified.

Comments:

The child's return/repatriation is not the only way out. Solutions can be found in transit or at the place of destination, either provisional or permanent, based on a rigorous evaluation of the available resources in the child's environment, their accessibility and quality, and on the determination of the child's best interests (BID).

Taking the risks into account should not make us forget the gains and opportunities that movement/migration can offer children. Moreover, protecting migrant children does not rule out fighting against child trafficking.

This paper was elaborated in the framework of the international campaign 'Destination Unknown': destination-unknown.org



A woman wearing a purple headscarf and a child with braided hair are looking at a chalkboard. The woman is writing on the board with a piece of chalk. In the background, other people are visible, including a child sitting on the ground. A yellow and blue bucket is also present. The scene appears to be an outdoor or semi-outdoor classroom.

I. Return to the fundamentals of protective accompaniment for children in West Africa.

A – An approach based on research and institutional learning in West Africa.

From assessments...

While the fight against child trafficking in West and Central Africa remains a priority for governments and child protection agencies, many interventions starting from 2000 and on have substantially influenced the development of a strategy focusing on protecting children on the move.

1 – The children involved in mobility are not all victims of trafficking.

This new approach was developed within projects aiming at combatting exploitation and child trafficking, such as Tdh's intervention on protecting children migrating from Benin to Nigeria to work in the stone quarries, and migrant girls working as domestics in Burkina Faso. While the organization initially focused on repressing the perpetrators, intercepting the child migrants and systematically returning them to their place of origin, testimonies of the children concerned, intermediaries and the children's families have led field workers to acknowledge multiple scenarios, such as voluntary movements based on an individual or family strategy, motivated by the desire to get a job and a better life.

2 – Child mobility means risks/vulnerability/danger just as well as chances for personal development.

Without denying the existence of trafficking and the risks related in many cases to the movement of the children and their involvement in hazardous work, an analysis of the situations experienced by the children shone a new light on the phenomenon, stopping the systematic application of the status of victim to children in a situation of mobility. Except for a few serious exceptions, the children find good reasons to consider their situation in a positive way and refuse to be considered and treated as victims. They also demand respect both as workers and as children, calling for the right to complete the project that led them to migrate. For the children as well as their families, mobility is understood as a source of opportunities.

3 – The invisibility of the thousands of children victims of trafficking, exploitation and abuse that slip through the nets of the protection and interception systems.

As governmental structures have been prioritising repression policies, they currently lack sufficient human, financial or material resources to intercept all children presumed to be victims of trafficking. Operations are concentrated in border areas or on the roads, but hardly at all at the places of destination. Thousands of children slip through the net and are thus deprived of any sort of protection at their destination. For this reason, since the beginning of 2000, organizations protecting children on the move began to review their strategy.

« The position I endorse, along with numerous specialists and colleagues, consists of recognizing every migrant girl domestic servant as a victim once her person or rights have been affected. But we reject perceiving her solely as a victim. And, above all, we refrain from treating her merely as a victim. » Olivier Feneyrol, 2011.

4 – Observations on the failure of repatriation policies .

Systematic return/repatriation of the children often failed due to the lack of discernment between situations of trafficking and those of voluntary mobility. Teams often had to deal with children and families not understanding or even refusing a 'forced' return. In many cases returned children ended up leaving again, often under more dangerous – because clandestine – conditions, circumventing frontier checkpoints or major roads. The relationship of trust between the formal child protection stakeholders and the children and their families was compromised.

5 – The absence of consistent alternatives for the returned/repatriated children or would-be repatriates.

Considering children as victims, proven or potential, interventions aimed at returning children to their families (or hindering their leaving), without the necessary protective measures to keep the children from leaving home once again. However, even if measures

were taken, they couldn't meet the needs of all the child candidates for departure or repatriated/returned, as there were thousands of them when organization first started to fight against child trafficking, and every situation of child mobility was considered to be a situation of trafficking. In addition, the alternatives offered were often at odds with the examples of children and young people who had been successful in their migration adventure, which fuelled the departure of fresh children.

6 – The issue of child protection cannot be solved without reckoning with the community players involved in child mobility.

Social workers also pointed out the difficult equation regarding families, intermediaries (touts, transporters), Koranic teachers, landlords, employers and other adults or youngsters involved in the movement of children. What role do they ultimately play? Is there no way of turning them into allies rather than adversaries in child protection? Frequently accused of being traffickers or accomplices in trafficking at the beginning of the fight, it must be noted that they could also play a protective role for the children. Terre des

hommes came to this conclusion when analysing the role and involvement of all the community players involved in the migration of young girls from Sourou (Burkina Faso) ¹.

¹ Project to fight child trafficking and exploitation (LETTE), Tdh Burkina Faso, 2004

Community players in the local protection networks (LPN) in Burkina Faso: the Sourou-Ouagadougou influx

At the places of origin, the community protection networks are composed of:

- the customary authorities (village headmen, religious leaders);
- administrative authorities (village development committees, teachers, headmasters, town councillors);
- associative authorities (associations of parents of schoolchildren, or teaching mothers, expat associations, association of Koranic teachers in Di);
- opinion leaders (e.g.: large merchants who are benefactors and well respected);
- aunts/mothers who traditionally motivate or help the girls to migrate;
- transporters (bus drivers, taxi drivers, taxi-moto or truck drivers, etc.).

At the place of destination, the community protection networks are composed of:

- the landlords who take in girls from their own villages;
- expat associations (the same as those in the place of origin);
- 'big sisters' who look after the less experienced or less resourceful girls;
- relatives (older brothers, aunts, etc.) who take in the girls from their own family);
- the employers who have adopted the joint code of conduct;
- the transporters (bus depot staff, vehicle drivers).

The community networks in the places of origin and destination are expected to communicate and collaborate (awareness-raising activities, preparation for migration, control of the age of migrant girls, exchange of news, support in the case of family return, help in cases of abuse, exploitation or bad treatment, etc.). (OFN, 2012)

In 2005 this innovative step enabled us to discover 'endogenous' protection practices (EPP) that were promoted, integrated and strengthened for migrant girls. The EPP are protection practices designed and implemented independently by community players². Rather than reducing protection for children on the move, Tdh also relied on these endogenous players to protect the children.

In the same period, in 2006, through the PACTE project, the international NGO Save the Children Canada also created a network of community and institutional players to protect children on the move, with the concept of a 'safety net for migrant children' set up in three cross-border countries (Burkina, Mali, Guinea³). This approach illustrates the development of their strategy to fight against trafficking, started in 2004, towards a more comprehensive approach of protection for migrant children in the sub-region.

... to evidence.

In the mid-2000s it became clear that the policies and programmes to combat child trafficking had revealed obvious limits in terms of results. Protection stakeholders were fully conscious of the need of a better understanding of child mobility in order to make the interventions more effective.

Based on these findings and lessons learned, various national and regional agencies initiated researches and capitalizations with the aim of getting more detailed insight into child mobility, the actors involved, the risks endured, the opportunities linked to mobility, etc. As for Terre des hommes, the studies and action-oriented research initiated by the regional protection unit between 2004 and 2008 allowed the organization to initiate a different approach to the protection of children on the move⁴.

² *Landlords: traffickers or protectors?* Capitalisation report, Ouagadougou, Tdh/Performances, 2007

³ *Regional project PACTE (Burkina-Mali-Guinea)*, Save the Children Canada, 2004-2009.

⁴ *See bibliography (Terre des hommes).*

The results of these studies and their recommendations were presented in broader contexts such as in the framework of the RWGAT (Regional working group against trafficking) at a regional level. In 2008, following an initiative of Tdh's regional unit in West Africa, a joint plan came into existence between the members of this working group, the 'Joint regional programme for children and youth on the move in West and Central Africa', focusing on research and capitalization. Implemented from 2008 to 2011 in four West African countries (Benin, Burkina, Faso, Guinea and Togo), its purpose was to widen the area of knowledge as well as to capitalize experiences, the 'feelings' and the assumptions of stakeholders in the field, through a more scientific point of view.

At an institutional level, steering the project gave way to the creation of a 'Regional platform on child mobility', bringing together the main protection agencies in a Regional Monitoring Committee (RMC) representing the area offices of eight international organizations⁵ and about sixty national stakeholders (UN offices and international NGO agencies, organizations for cooperation and ministerial services) who joined the regional initiative as the project's National Steering Committees (NSC).

The outcome of the work of the platform in Phase 1 of the regional project called 'Mobility' was the launch in December 2011 of a document entitled: 'What protection is there for children affected by mobility in West Africa'. This paper contains analyses, reports, definitions and lessons learned, and presents important concepts, terminology and approaches that all agreed upon: the concepts of child mobility and children affected by mobility, community protection and institutional child protection, child protective measures, etc.

From this joint positioning, seven points emerged. The following points have a direct link to Child Protective Accompaniment:

Positions directly linked to CPA

Position 3

Child mobility requires protection measures that guarantee the reduction of children's level of vulnerability and their personal development at local, national and regional (cross-border) levels.

Position 4

The specific needs of children affected by mobility are to be taken into consideration by the national child protection systems through the implementation of measures of protective accompaniment.

Position 5

Community mechanisms for support and protection of children are an integral part of the protection systems.

Position 6

The effective participation of children and their organizations is an essential element to be included in any protective operation.

⁵ ILO, UNICEF, IOM, ENDA Jeunesse Action, Plan International, Save the Children, Terre des hommes Foundation, African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY).

The principal recommendations made by the regional platform on mobility are to set up protective accompaniment measures for children and to watch that the multifaceted, multidimensional and dynamic aspect of child mobility is taken into account, not only in national and regional policies on child protection, but also in regional and international policies on Development and Migration. This paper constitutes a basic frame of reference in which the players are committed to develop joint actions of advocacy and operationalization in the framework of the second phase of the project (2011-2015).

Three organizations from the regional platform, Save the Children (SC), International Social Service (ISS) and Terre des hommes (Tdh), have been part since 2011 of the operationalization of these positions and of their recommendations through the implementation of protection projects for unaccompanied migrant children, following a protective accompaniment approach⁶. The diversity of sponsors, the European Union (Tdh and ISS) and the OAK Foundation (SC), also bears witness of the donors' support to this innovative approach.

B – What are the Measures for Child Protective Accompaniment (CPA)?

'Accompanying to protect, protect by accompanying'

In the context of child mobility in West Africa, protective accompaniment consists in giving social support to children (direct support) or to their relatives (indirect) with the aim of:

- Preventing the risks connected with child mobility (particularly early school drop-out, loss of their civil identity, exploitation, trafficking and abuse, etc.);
- Helping children on the move to improve their situation, to access their rights, to live better and to be able to evolve in their best interests;
- To bring assistance to children victims of exploitation, trafficking and abuse;
- To make the children's community and institutional environments more protective all along the migration route.

Protective accompaniment is a real evolution for social work in West Africa. For a long time, interventions in the field of child protection were dominated by an approach based on supporting child victims needing special measures of protection merely by linking a beneficiary and a social worker on the basis of care-taking procedures that were often pre-established and standardized. For each problem, a pattern for rehabilitation/reintegration was predefined before it was applied to **each and every child**. The intervention was limited to providing one-off services to meet the children's needs (rather than their rights) according to the resources available.

Little space was given to child participation in the process of assessing problems and identifying solutions. Often ignored, the child was seen as a passive victim. In addition, care-taking exclusively focused on the beneficiary independently from his or her surroundings. The socio-institutional approach was of prime importance: the social circle (family, community) of a child in street situation, exploited or victim of violence being only rarely associated in identifying the problem or seeking solutions. The children and their family received and implement solutions worked out by the social worker alone.

Moreover, in this approach, the social worker worked alone, often dissociated from any institutional back-

⁶ "Protecting and supporting children on the move" (Burkina Faso, Mali and the Ivory Coast), Save the children, 2011-2013; "Protection of non-accompanied migrant children in West Africa", Tdh, BF-Mali-Benin-Togo-Guinea (2013-2016); "Regional collaboration network for the protection and integration of children and young migrants in difficulty", SSI, 2013-2016).

ground (health, education, justice, safety, etc.). This way of working only lead to finding partial solutions to the child's problem due to the limited resources and capabilities of the sole sector of social action in our countries of intervention.

The CPA approach is therefore innovative as it offers a **personalised social accompaniment (PSA)**. This psychosocial approach aims at better reconciling individuals with their environment, making it more coherent, harmonious, in order to promote change in their behaviour that will improve their wellbeing. This approach is centred on the individuals, which includes taking into account their uniqueness, their characteristics and their role as actors, without seeking to isolate them from their surroundings.

The PSA is based on the following principles:

- It encourages listening to the individuals being helped and helping them take initiatives;
- It increases their ability to analyse their needs and choices, and to find solutions within the child's ecosystem as a matter of priority;
- It focuses on developing their potential (psychological, physical, intellectual);
- It focuses on strengthening their relationships with other people and with their surroundings (integration);
- It constitutes a living, iterative process within a limited period of time, which can be adapted according to the changes experienced during its implementation, and is based on a flexible attitude of dialogue with advice and support from the social worker.

Implementing personalised social accompaniment thus consists of ensuring that the various parties adopt a new attitude, the child as well as his or her family and the social worker. Social workers, just like doctors or teachers – particularly in a rural area or in less-educated communities – continue to benefit from their influential position and significant power. They are perceived as having unarguable knowledge, an image that takes considerable effort on all parts to break with. In fact, during the accompaniment process, social workers do not have the know-how, but

they are able to coordinate the potential resources they will try to find and make use of, in the child and his or her family, guardian or living environment. The social worker must not reduce the child to being a real or potential victim to be dealt with. On the contrary, children must be seen as actors who have resources and potential, are capable of analysing, making choices and taking decisions for their own wellbeing. Children should no longer see themselves as victims who allow themselves to be guided and looked after. They should become conscious of their potential, abilities, rights, and **the scope given to them** to express themselves and take action.

Personalised social accompaniment results in reciprocal commitment based on mutual acceptance of a common path in a timeframe to be decided on. The approach must be iterative, both for the person accompanied and the person accompanying. No diagnosis or easy solution exists at the beginning of the intervention, which, in addition, is susceptible to change during the process.

In this accompaniment approach, the social worker will also mobilise resources existing in the child's environment. This means that social workers should seize the global picture, meaning the child within his or her family, community and social and natural environment. They should try to take into account all aspects of the person's life, in this case the child, who is not necessarily isolated. His or her life project can be part of the family and community dynamics. It is therefore a question not of doing something for the child, but rather of **doing something with the child and his or her surroundings**. This means assessing the child's situation not only in relation to the risks, but also in relation to the resources and opportunities available in the surroundings. Here it is important to lessen the risks without systematically compromising the initial project of the children and/or their family, unless they themselves decide to give it up and replace it by another project.

Children thus become active agents in looking for solutions to the problems they meets, and the social

worker supports them in defining their needs, their expectations and solutions relating to the children's abilities and the resources found in their environment. **This psychosocial approach is a cornerstone of protective accompaniment.** It applies to all social interventions that benefit children, including children on the move.

C – How does CPA link up with the main approaches on which our child protection interventions are based?

CPA, even if it is primarily based on a personalised social accompaniment of the child, equally includes other approaches on which Tdh's interventions in West Africa are based.

1 – An approach based on the rights of the child

Apart from the conclusions drawn in the field relating to the operational limits of the 'classic' approaches fighting against child trafficking and exploitation, CPA is first and foremost founded on a rights based approach, i.e. the obligation to respect human rights, in particular children's rights, such as those included in the principal regional and international instruments of reference (the CDE and the CADBE), ratified by the countries. The approach based on an assessment of the needs of a person in difficulty and of his or her satisfaction depending on resources and means available, is thus replaced by an approach that places an obligation on the debtors of rights vis-à-vis those with rights.

1.1 – The right of ALL children to be protected

A child protective accompaniment approach follows a key principle: minors on the move are children above all, whose rights remain independent from their migrant status. States that ratified the relevant international instruments cannot deny them: the right to be protected against violence and exploitation, the right to healthcare, education, free time, etc.

Therefore, in accordance with the principle of non-discrimination, each and every child has the right to be protected, including children who do not benefit from a status that would grant them specific

rights, such as refugees, asylum seekers or victims of trafficking. This involves giving every separated or unaccompanied child the benefits of the social protection system that exists for all citizens, as well as the specific measures for protection such as the General Comment No. 6 of the CRC: *"The principle of non-discrimination, in all its aspects, is applicable to all the stages of dealing with separated or unaccompanied children. This principle forbids in particular any discrimination based on the fact that a child is unaccompanied or separated, a refugee, asylum-seeker or migrant. This principle, if properly understood, is not exclusive and even calls for a differentiation of the special needs of protection such as those resulting from the age and/or gender. Furthermore, measures should be taken to address possible negative misperceptions regarding unaccompanied or separated children in society, or any stigmatization of them. (...)"*⁷

1.2 – Respecting the best interests of the child (Art.3)

Protective accompaniment is based on the fundamental principle of respecting the children's best interests. It is a cardinal principle not to decide a priori what is good or not for them, but to carefully assess their situation. Whatever their status, the decisions should be taken by the main debtors of rights on the basis of what is the most favourable situation for the children, and what can help bring about their wellbeing.

This legal expression, the Best Interests of the Child (BIC), is mentioned in Article 3.1 of the CRC, and in Article 41 of the CABRC, the latter convention stressing that the best interests of the child should be the sole consideration to be taken into account.

This was recently stated during the 68th session of the UN Assembly General in its Article 13: *"We express our will to protect the fundamental rights of migrant children, considering their vulnerability, in particular those who are unaccompanied, in order to meet their needs regarding healthcare, education and psychosocial development, watching that the best interest of these children be a vital consideration of the policies of integration, repatriation and family reunification."*⁸

⁷ General comment No. 6 on the treatment of non-accompanied children and separated children living away from home, UNO-CRC, June 2005.

⁸ Declaration of the High-level Dialogue on international migration and development, draft resolution. 68th UN Assembly General, New York, 1 October 2013.

This principle is especially important when tackling the issue of children on the move. In actual fact, in the light of circumstances that characterize child mobility, the question is not to know whether or not to authorize child mobility, but rather whether it is in the best interest of the child (individually or collectively) to be mobile? By choosing the first part of the question, one risks to adopt a political position that does not acknowledge either exclusively or primarily the child's interests. **On the contrary, when wondering whether the best interests of the child could be taken into account during child mobility, one is obliged to furnish more or less objective proof before understanding the living conditions and plans of the children.**

With the implementation of a CPA approach, we are constantly confronted with the delicate question of social norms and legal standards with respect to the principle of the best interests of the child. As is underlined in the study carried out in 2010 in the context of the regional project Mobility, *"The law can sometimes address policy options and its implementation can produce negative effects for the child. Withdrawing child domestic workers and placing them in an apprenticeship or back at school resolves the problem by law. But can we maintain that this resolves the issue for the child? What are the supporting measures made available by the State for the proper application of this law? What are the resources that the State makes available for the families, so that they are no longer obliged to send their children away to work?"*⁹. It is all a question of alternatives and strengths of the system. The importance of 'non-official' standards goes hand in hand with the weak capacity of the State to build an environment respecting the legal standards it imposes. We are here talking about the gap between the law and common practice, as one knows its importance in Africa where multiple 'informal norms' appear to govern behaviour and, amongst other things, make survival possible¹⁰.

This dichotomy also arises within the same category of rights that can enter 'into conflict' with, for example, the right to grow up with one's own family, the right to survival, to life and to development. As C. Sevet emphasizes (2013), "family is the best place to grow up, but it is also the best place to suffer..."¹¹

In practice, respecting the best interests of the child means not forbidding children to work or to migrate, or even to systematically repatriate/return/withdraw a child from a situation of work or mobility, but to ensure that children working and/or migrating do not do so in dangerous conditions that would expose them to the risks of exploitation, trafficking or mistreatment (ETM), and that actual victims of ETM newly benefit from their rights. This means: firstly assess the conditions in which the children live (with their participation and that of their family circle); identify the risk factors and the protective factors of their living and working environments; find out if a real life plan underlies their mobility; learn about the context that lead the children to leave their place of origin; and implement appropriate measures of prevention, support or assistance based on the above analyses. The example below conveys the complexity of reconciling social and legal standards, and the constant search for negotiated solutions so as always to assert the best interest of the child.

⁹ *Taking the best interests of the child into account in the operational procedures of protection projects children affected by mobility*; Phase 1 of the Mobility Project, CNP Togo, Cyrille Ekué KOMLAN, August 2010.

¹⁰ *The plurality of standards and their dynamics in Africa*, Implications for public policies, Jean-Pierre Chauveau, Marc Le Pape, and Jean-Pierre Olivier de Sardan.

¹¹ Case Management Workshop, Tdh regional Mobility project, Ouagadougou, November 2013.

In Nigeria, in 2007, child labour was totally forbidden up to 18 years of age. Tdh reached an agreement with the Beninese communities in Abeokuta (gravel quarries in Nigeria) and in Zakpota (original location in Benin) that children under 14 no longer work in the Nigerian quarries, however that those over 14 working in the quarries should be identified/registered so that they could be followed-up and supported with the following two-fold aim:

- 1) in the mid- or long-term, persuade them to quit the quarry and to pursue another educational or socio-economic project in Nigeria or in Benin;
- 2) in the short term, to make their lives safer, to protect them against abuse, forced labour, moral and physical suffering, sexual exploitation, etc., and to integrate them into the life of the Beninese community of Abeokuta outside the quarries (particularly at the weekend, through games and leisure activities organized by the community).

No conciliation was possible between the law and our stage-by-stage approach to improve the situation, based on taking into account the reality and the limits/opportunities.

However, Tdh succeeded in obtaining the support of the Nigerian authorities (NAPTIP, social affairs, police, immigration, etc.) and in getting our strategy validated, that in fact authorized the children over 14 to remain in the quarries, so that a lasting solution could be found for them, even when their choice was to stay working/training in Nigeria. (Tdh, Benin)

This is a key positioning in establishing child protective accompaniment measures. Indeed, the approach begins with the best interests of the child determination and favours the implementation of conditions reducing ETM risks, the improvement of the child's situation, the optimization of opportunities for development, and the protection of victims.

Tdh's position tallies with that of other organizations such as the **African Movement of Working Children and Youth (AMWCY)**, a pioneer in the 80's of non-abolitionist views, which declared that: "We are against the exploitation of our work, but we are in favour of decent work, with schedules adapted to our education and our leisure time." The first right established by the movement on child and youth mobility is the right to stay at home, and not being forced to leave against one's will. But this principle should not be systematically considered as contradictory with mobility. The AMWCY considers that if a child has to move, he or she should do it according to his or her needs, under proper conditions and accompanied. The international organization for child protection **Save the Children** in a position paper summarizes its stance by

declaring that it accepts neither blanket banning of all forms of child work, nor an approach that unequivocally encourages child work¹². It differentiates three categories of work that lead to different protection responses: work that is extremely harmful to children, where violations of their rights are impossible to avoid and that demand urgent removal of the child; work in the frame of which rights are violated but where it is possible to prevent these breaches by improving the working conditions or by helping the children to find better, alternative solutions to the harmful activity; and finally, work in which rights are not violated and that can contribute to the realization of children's rights. This type of work can be encouraged.

In order to better implement this principle, tools have been developed by international agencies to facilitate the determination of the best interests of the child. However, the best tools in the region concern children in an emergency situation (Guidelines on Determining the Best Interests of the Child/ UNHCR). **Save the Children UK** has developed a tool utilized in South Africa: 'Best Interests Determination for Children on the move' (BID, 2010) for children in a situation of mobility¹³. The tool-

¹² Position of Save the Children on children and work, Save the Children, 2004.

¹³ The BID tool should be adapted to the context of the West African region in 2014, with the participation of members of the regional group for child protection.

box includes a form for 'determining the best interests of the child', a method of collecting data that enables social workers and other relevant authorities to give their opinions on the methods of appropriate care, in accordance with the best interests of the child.

One should not, however, lose sight of the fact that this is not about developing ready-made solutions, adaptable to each and every situation. Rather, agreement should be reached on a combination of elements to enable an in-depth examination of the child's life situation before taking the most appropriate decisions. In the destination areas, the risks as well as the opportunities are varied and depend entirely on the context. They include the chances or risks linked to employment, living conditions, access to education and to services, discrimination/equality, stigmatization/respect, and marginalization/ integration. The situation of each child is unique regarding protection and risk factors existing in its present environment. In every case, so as to determine the best interests of the child, we need time (for an authentic analysis of the situation) and the wholehearted participation of the boys and girls concerned. The following example illustrates perfectly the impact of a standardized method of dealing with the cases identified, and without the real participation of the children and their family.

Case study (Tdh, Benin)

S., fatherless, lived with his mother, who had remarried in Abeokuta in Nigeria, where he also had older half-brothers. Sometimes S. went to visit these brothers in the quarries, and it was during one of the visits that he was intercepted in the stone quarries of Abeokuta in 2007; he was about 13 years old. He was repatriated (officially returned) to Benin and his paternal family in Zakpota. Ever since he got back, the first signs of future difficulties became apparent. His parental relatives did not really understand how this child, living with his mother, could have been intercepted and repatriated to Zakpota, where nobody was ready to take him in or take responsibility for looking after him. The family started by suggesting that Tdh should take him back to be put into a boarding school where he would be looked after. The team managed to persuade the family to take him in again, as, despite everything, that is where he belonged. A paternal uncle finally accepted to take on the responsibility.

After he returned to this family, S. had a lot of difficulty with social integration. A few days after going to school, he stole 40 000 F CFA from his class master and could only escape public condemnation by the fortuitous intervention of the Tdh agent and the school headmaster. In actual fact, his great-grandfather, a member of the village security committee, had always been ruthless in punishing thieves in the village. The villagers wanted to treat S. in the same way as his great-grandfather had dealt with those thieves.

After this incident he was virtually put in quarantine, and lived alone in an isolated hut. Left to fend for himself, he did odd jobs or 'Djoko' in the village to get food and keep himself going. He ended up leaving school after only one year.

His mother came over once to negotiate for his return, but she was not listened to, as her ex-husband's relatives demanded that she came back to remarry into the family.

The second attempt at negotiating the boy's return was made by Tdh's team in Nigeria in 2009. This time, the team in Abeokuta, involving the team in Zakpota, did a new analysis of the situation. The assessment stated that the child's environment was not protective.

The boy was consequently taken back to his mother in Abeokuta on April 1st, 2009. In order to carry out the action plan drawn up, S. was helped to get a job learning to be a motorcycle mechanic.

1.3 – The child’s participation (Art.12)

Tdh’s approach is founded on the following principle: *no action for child protection has a chance of success if it is not based on the participation of the child and his or her close family circle.*

Children have the right to be active participants. A key element of the conventions on child rights (CRC and ACRWC) is their confirming children as active, legitimate holders of rights they are able to exercise according to their maturity and experience. This gives them the right to express their opinions about any decisions affecting them.

Article 12 of the CRC tackles this question, but the right to be heard is limited to children capable of forming their own views, whilst making it clear that their opinions would be duly taken into account according to their age and degree of maturity. The Charter does not state that not only children capable of forming their own views may be heard by the judge or by an intermediary. No age (or other) limit is set. Neither does the article state that the child’s opinion should be taken into consideration “with regard to its age and degree of maturity”. However, reference is made to Article 7 of the Charter, where it is stated that “every child who is able to communicate will be guaranteed the right to express his or her opinions freely in all areas and to make his or her views known, subject to the restrictions established by law”.

From an etymological point of view, the protective accompaniment approach – unlike the traditional ap-

proach – is already based on the actor’s participation, including children. ‘Supporting’ or ‘accompanying’ makes it possible to evolve from an authoritative approach, infantilization, or charity for vulnerable people. It suggests that the children themselves, as well as the people accompanying them, play a part in the process of assessing their situation, looking for solutions and carrying out their plans. They are given the chance to express themselves, to take a decision. Their opinion is taken into account, just as much as their maturity and experience are taken into consideration.

As Olivier Feneyrol emphasized: “The approach underlying protective support [...] for child actors rather than child victims is most particularly appropriate for children who have migrated voluntarily to get an education, professional experience or a better social identity, and to earn money or personal or symbolic property [...]”¹⁴. These children are often the active factors behind their own migration. Moreover, Dorte Thorsen, quoted by Marie Diop (2012), reminds us that the children who decide to migrate independently often have information (correct or erroneous) about the places they are going to, as well as the livelihood strategies they will be using once there [...]”¹⁵. The child is seen here not as a passive victim, but as a real actor for his or her own protection.

Most of the working children in Tdh’s project in Togo know how important education is. **The interviews showed their maturity and their ability to make choices and to cope: a large majority of the girls continued to sell items at the big market for their guardians whilst continuing their schooling.** They have individual plans that show their ambitions; they want to become: a dressmaker, doctor, bank employee, office employee, owner of a clothing shop, etc. They are ready to fight to continue their training and are fully committed to it. The support of the facilitators consists of negotiating with the employers/parents and the children to specify the best conditions for the fulfilment of the youngster’s project.¹⁶

¹⁴ South Pole article, Olivier Feneyrol, 2011.

¹⁵ *Migration of Non-accompanied children from West Africa to North Africa, UNICEF report, 2012.*

¹⁶ *Taking the best interests of the child into account in the operational procedures of protection projects children affected by mobility*; Phase 1 of the Mobility Project, CNP Togo, Cyrille Ekué KOMLAN, August 2010.

1.4 – The right to life, survival and development (Art. 6)

As stated in the General Comment No. 6 on the treatment of unaccompanied or separated children, “the obligation of the State party includes protecting, as far as possible, a child against any violence and any exploitation likely to compromise his or her right to life, survival and development. Separated or unaccompanied children are exposed to various phenomena likely to damage their lives, their survival and their development, such as trafficking with a view to sexual or other exploitation, or the participation in criminal activities likely to put the child in danger or even, in extreme cases, to cause his or her death.”¹⁷ (CRC, 2005)

CPA, by wanting to be able to identify, approach and accompany a child anywhere and at any time along his or her journey through observation, accompaniment and response systems, gives itself the means to prevent or handle situations likely to put the life and survival of children on the move in danger, and also to encourage their development by offering them places to get support and empowerment throughout their travels.

2 – A “system” approach

Another pillar of CPA which enhances the classic approach to social work in West Africa is the “system” approach, which means developing or strengthening the holistic, integrated and intersectoral dimension of the national system of child protection, and which allows it to be extended over the whole national territory through regional and local systems. This system approach intends to correct two recurrent tendencies, in particular:

- Setting up barriers between the projects and/or the services specialized in different themes;
- Reducing the problems/needs of a child to the field through which he or she was identified.

The problems are often treated in a fragmentary, separate way, by ad hoc measures, distinct and disconnected from one another. All the child-support activities thus lack cohesion and synergy, and sometimes coherence, as well. In addition, for Tdh, “a

*child protection system should not only protect children from abuse, neglect, violence and exploitation. It should also embrace all the rights of the child. In Tdh’s view, as also recognized by the UN Convention on Child Rights, all rights are interrelated.”*¹⁸

In order to break this institutional isolation, the first step in a “system” approach is to build a network of stakeholders from various child protection sectors. Healthcare, education, justice, social protection, safety – fields of action that must be known to each other to favour synergies in favour of child protection. The aim is to improve access to and the quality of services offered to the children, **providing them with protection**. It is no longer about the social agent working in isolation with the only human, material and financial resources available to his or her department, but rather to identify and profit from the other resources in a child’s surroundings. Social workers should be able to refer to other professionals; they are part of a team and work in tandem with others, even if they remain the focal points for the person they are accompanying.

This approach goes through **the strengthening of the abilities of the stakeholders involved in the protection and accompanying systems** by developing the skills required and by providing logistic and material support for the State decentralized services (social, healthcare, education, police and legal services). It is also based on research and capitalization of interventions for better knowledge management. This makes it possible to influence **the legal and institutional context**, another component of the child protection system. The coherence and efficiency of a system thus depends to a great extent on networking between the actors and between the various components of this system.

It is important to specify that the child protection system in question here is not limited to State services and its specialized partners (the formal part of the national system), but that it integrates equally the endogenous/community protection practices developed

¹⁷ Op.Cit., UNO-CRC, June 2005.

¹⁸ *Strengthening child protection systems thematic policy*, Tdh 2011.

by the communities, social actors and the children themselves (the informal part of the national system). In addition, for a real and integrated protection service, networking is not limited solely to the endogenous and institutional protection actors but is open to anyone likely to resolve the problems experienced by the children and their families. As Mirela Shuteriqi¹⁹ wrote, it is thus important to continue working towards an improvement in the economic and educational perspectives at the places of origin, at the same time as tackling the questions of child exploitation and abuse. It is equally important to invest in leisure activities and other opportunities for development in order to reduce the overall pressure on the children and their families. This will contribute to the children leaving home later, better prepared and/or under better conditions.

In this way, all the resources that exist in the children's surroundings, whether they regard the children themselves, their family, community or institutional environment, are taken into consideration with the aim of putting them to work **to benefit the children and their wellbeing**.

This "system" approach is a focus of concern for the main child protection agencies. Thirteen of them have recently materialised their concern drafting a *"Joint declaration on the strengthening of child protection systems in Sub-Saharan Africa"*, calling upon African governments to reinforce their child protection systems in order to guarantee the right of children to a life free of violence, abuse, exploitation and neglect in emergency and non-emergency situations.²⁰ Strengths and weaknesses of the national child protection systems have been identified or are in the process of being identified in most countries of the West African region, in order to guide partners in their intervention.

3 – The community approach

The community approach places emphasis on the participation of the people themselves in the definition and satisfaction of their own needs. It is closely linked with the concepts of participation, partnership, cooperation and social mediation.

As well as the children themselves, members of their community are perceived as potential actors of their protection in the process of protective accompaniment. This differs strongly with the approach that excludes the child's family circle from identifying and solving his or her problem, and during which it is even considered a priori to be a negative factor in the child's environment, particularly in the context of child mobility.

The research and capitalization done by Terre des hommes in West Africa highlighted the role of formal community players (community-based organizations with a legal status) or informal (single individuals or informally organized ones) working for the protection of migrant children at various stages of their migration routes. This has shown that the plans for an unaccompanied child's departure involve other people who are more or less close to him: an uncle, a mother or father, a friend, a brother or sister. Along his or her migration route and at the place destination, guardians, employers, landlords or people from the same region also play an important part in the progress of the child's migration plan, and protection: all these actors, at all stages, can play a part in making the child feel welcome, giving advice, guidance, or even identifying and denouncing any situations where child rights are violated.

The knowledge and know-how of the communities have been recognized in Tdh's interventions by the idea of *"Endogenous Protection Practices"* (EPP). The EPP are attitudes, behaviours and mechanisms for child protection fulfilled on their own initiative by the families, the children, and various other people in the communities of origin, transit or destination. In contrast to the practices and mechanisms of protection imported into the communities by 'exogenous'

¹⁹ *Unaccompanied and on the move: risks and opportunities for migrant children*, Mirela Shuteriqi, Protection Advisor, Terre des hommes, 2011

²⁰ *Strengthening the national system of child protection in Sub-Saharan Africa*, Joint inter-institutional statement, 2013. (African Child Policy Forum; Environment and Development in the Third World; African Movement of Working Children and Youth; Oak Foundation; Plan International; Regional Inter-agency Task Team on Children and AIDS; Regional Psychosocial Support Initiative; Save the Children; Terre des hommes; UNICEF; Wellspring International; and World Vision).

players (State services, NGOs, UN agencies etc.) the EPP fall within an internal, autonomous process. They can be based on know-how, traditions and ancestral beliefs, or they come from cultural cross-fertilization, in other words the importation of new and modern elements into the local ways of thinking and doing by members of the community. In either case, the local players are the authors of these practices and have no need of outside support to carry them out, although this does not mean that the EPP cannot be integrated into wider systems of child protection, including institutional actors and people from other communities.

The EPP approach proposed by Tdh represents a new way of working for the protection agents, who should not only recognize the existence of community actors, **but should also give them a significant position in the activities and systems of child protection.**

Our job as an NGO specialised in child protection consists of **ensuring that the activities undertaken by community actors in the framework of our projects are realized under conditions that guarantee the safety of the children and encourages high-quality services.** Their participation relies, firstly, on accurate and concise information about their roles, rights, duties, the social organization and the function of the communities, the risks run by the children, and the forms of protection that characterize these living environments.

4 – The 'flow' approach

The flow approach is a way of analysing child mobility and designing child protection by taking into account the existence of certain social and geographic flows into which the individual displacements of children fit.

When opting for a flow approach, we must first of all forget about the compartmentalized approach, which resumes the children to the place they were found, the moment and context of their identification. On the contrary, we must re-position the children in a far broader framework, taking into account not only their own journey and the stages of their migratory process

(past, present and future), but also the fact that their own displacement is in line with long-standing forms of mobility involving, in time and space, hundreds or even thousands of other children with a social profile similar to theirs.

This is the way that children in street or working situation are often approached – from the angle of the problem that made it possible to identify them (homeless, in a situation of exploitation or abuse), without taking into consideration the dimension of mobility that also characterizes them. Many children have thus escaped identification and the attempts to give assistance or support by protection agents, because the latter have not understood that these children evolve in a dynamical space, going from one living place to another or from one work place to another.

Opting for a flow approach thus makes it possible to be able to identify, join up with and help a child at any place and time of his or her journey, by re-positioning the child with regards to the pre-existing and long-standing social and geographic flows. This induces a dynamic, synergic relationship of the mechanisms and protection actors between the places of origin, transit and destination, both at a national and a transnational level. These transregional and transnational protective mechanisms should be in line with the protection systems network established all along the children's migration corridors. They can take the form of local committees for protection, local networks for protection, or any other organization that combines a community and an institutional level of protection. The important thing is to ensure continuity of a protection chain everywhere children on the move are to be found.



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II. Child Protection Accompaniment in practice : strategies, methods and tools.

A – CPA strategies

CPA is based on various strategies related to prevention, protection and the rehabilitation of child victims or those who are vulnerable. In a process of child mobility, these strategies can be implemented at different stages along the child's route ²¹.

1 – Prevention strategies in a CPA approach

• The prevention of premature or risky mobility, trafficking and worst forms of child labour.

Protecting children against exploitation, trafficking and mistreatment (ETM) is the main priority outlined in the prevention strategies carried out by Tdh's teams in West Africa. These strategies involve social mobilization activities based on various types of support in the communities from which the children depart. They call upon the leaders, heads of families and the children themselves. Stronger emphasis is placed on social communication and mediation (in the form of village assemblies, for example), rather than on the more classic strategies of awareness raising. Here, the aim is to identify the problems to be solved with all the parties concerned, and to find the most appropriate solutions to avoid children leaving home too soon, or their involvement in mobility with a very high risk of ETA. Alternatives to mobility are proposed to the children who are most at risk, such as schooling, literacy tuition, apprenticeship or income-generating activities for adolescents or for the mothers of the children at risk. Finally, a reporting system is set up to alert the community when a child considered too young and at risk has left. The children's participation is strongly encouraged in the reporting system set up by the communities at risk.

• Preventing the risks faced in forms of mobility considered to be 'acceptable' and/or 'potentially beneficial'.

For children who are candidates for leaving home and who are judged to be less at risk of ETM in the framework of their mobility, prevention is not the highest priority (preventing their leaving) but secondary (avoiding that the child does not fall into situations of ETM during his or her travels or who does not benefit (immediately) from appropriate assistance should it become necessary).

Secondary prevention is based on the children's access to key information and advice prior to their departure, related for example to the formal or informal contacts or services for protection they can get in touch with in transit or at their destination. This strategy can also be based on building the capacity of the children to design and anticipate their migration plans so as to avoid pitfalls and seize opportunities. The families of the children concerned are deeply involved in this strategy of mobility risk reduction; they can be called upon to make the departure of the child safer by activating their network along the child's route, or by establishing an identity document for the child. This prevention strategy should be accompanied by a monitoring system in places of transit and destination at an institutional and/or community level.

²¹ Appendix 2, 'Range of activities related to the various strategies in a system of protective accompaniment', Mike Dottridge, 2008

2 – Protection strategies in a CPA process

Protection for children on the move includes various strategies that go from networking to help them benefit from the forms of mutual aid and protection available in the areas of departure, transit and destination, to more individual care in assisting them to handle any difficulties and seize any opportunities encountered, as well as providing them with help where needed (identification, referral, care). It is important to add that in a process of protective accompaniment, the place of departure is not necessarily the child's place of origin (home, town, country). It can be a destination that the child wants to leave because of an opportunity elsewhere, or due to problems encountered. Once identified, these children can benefit from specific accompaniment or care, if necessary. Once rehabilitated, they can decide not to move away again, or opt for a new destination under better conditions.

One of the main challenges in protective accompaniment approach for children on the move is to be present during the children's journey, including the various places the children may move to at their destination. This strategy should not be implemented without the communities' participation. Indeed, the identification of children on the move is complicated for State services and NGOs, as the children move around a lot and are found in hard-to-access places: domestic households, informal urban economy, plantations, mines and quarries, at clandestine routes and crossing points, etc. Furthermore, children very rarely go to social services for help. As a result, organizations involved in the CPA process tend to closely associate the community players already involved in the children's lives, in the places of transit or destination. Lodgers are associated, as well as transport organizations, child associations or compatriots, sponsors, etc. They then become essential partners for the institutional protection services in terms of detection and warning of cases of children victims of trafficking, exploitation or abuse. Once a child is taken into care by the social services, the community actors continue to play an essential role in the follow-up and traceability of the children.

3 – (Re)-integration in a CPA process

'Reintegration' refers to a procedure set up after the child returns to its home, town or country (place of origin). 'Integration' refers to the procedure set up in the new destination. For Tdh, the purpose of (re)integration is that the child: a) **lives in a protective environment;** b) **has adequate access to its fundamental rights;** and c) **can further develop its options** (know how to plan and choose).²² Whichever choice is made, (re)integration is prepared from the first contact with the child, the social agent should work together with the child to find the best long-lasting solution; whether it is returning to the place of origin or remaining at the place of destination.

In a process of child protective accompaniment, unlike standardized case management, the child protection workers, in collaboration with the child and its family circle, are able to plan on-site rehabilitation, i.e. there where the child has chosen to work or to live. For example, a child identified by protection workers who have been mistreated by his or her employer can be removed from this non-protective environment and found another job in a workplace guaranteeing respect for child rights. It all depends on the strength of the child's network at the place of destination, the formal or informal protection mechanisms, and on the follow-up system he or she can benefit from to reduce the risks of exploitation, trafficking or abuse. The participation of the child and its family circle is crucial at this stage to adapt the intervention to the opportunities that offer its surroundings. As Tdh emphasized in its thematic policy on (re)integration, the opportunities allowing a child's integration in the country of destination should be carefully studied in the framework of the projects, but also his or her legal access to existing services and the chances of family alternatives at destination for unaccompanied children.

²² *Supporting child reintegration*, Terre des hommes policy, 2009.

On-site integration of children (Tdh, corridor Zakpota/Benin- Abeokuta/Nigeria)

Case study 1: Rosaline, a young Beninese girl, was taken to Nigeria by her maternal uncle, where she was hired as a domestic servant in a family, but frequently ill treated by her boss. Whilst trying to run away, she was caught by a man who attempted to rape her. Rosaline was rescued by the Edo network of child protection and taken to the child protection network in Lagos, who in turn requested Tdh, established in both Benin and in Nigeria, to help them find the girl's family in Benin.

Rosaline said she wanted to go back to school, and a hostel for young girls indicated its willingness to take her in and support her education. Her family was found, and after obtaining their consent, Rosaline stayed in Nigeria for the next three years to acquire professional skills. In this way, collaboration between the local protection networks in Edo, Lagos and Ogun, the Benin consulate in Nigeria and Tdh Benin Nigeria were able to handle an on-site situation of rehabilitation/integration, in the child's best interests.

Case study 2: A youngster from Benin nicknamed 'President' was encountered by social workers in the Zakpota stone quarries in Nigeria. 'President' was interested in getting a job outside the quarry, but he was worried about the need to earn money to look after his sick mother in Zakpota. After some discussion, a compromise was found in his best interests: the young man attended a training course for three days a week, worked in the quarry for three days and had one day off. Following his training, 'President' decided to start a business in Benin. He now has good qualifications and has become a useful person for training other youngsters and taking action against too-early, dangerous migration to the quarries of Abeokuta.²³

When repatriation is the option wished for by the child or the solution judged to be best by the protection worker, and in the child's best interest, the return should be prepared and carried out under conditions to ensure that the child and his or her family benefit from good accompaniment for home reintegration. It is indeed important that the (re)integration measures offer more than what offers emergency assistance,

aiming for a sustainable livelihood. The expression 'livelihood' must be understood here as 'the capabilities, assets and the activities required for a means of living'. Means of living are reckoned to be viable when they allow dealing with and recovering from situations of vulnerability such as stress or trauma.

²³ The High Level Dialogue on Migration and Development 2013: Why children matter. *Experiences and lessons learnt from interventions to protect children on the move, regional protection project for non-accompanied migrant children, Case study, Tdh Benin, 2013.*

The repatriation of endangered children on the move

"My name is Mamadou, and now I'm 19. My parents are farmers in the south of Senegal. I had a very tough childhood; when I was a little kid, I had to help farm the land with my brothers and parents. Because of my family's poverty, when I was still only a child I had to go on my own to the capital, Dakar, to look for a job. I did shoe-shining in the suburbs nearly every day, but thanks to a small association, I could go to a literacy course. [...] But the problems, above all financial, soon got too much and I decided to try an adventure. I crossed lots of frontiers to get to Algeria so I could then try to get to Europe, but in vain. I was intercepted by the Algerian police and simply thrown out into the desert at the Mali frontier, without water, food and almost without clothes. I was lucky enough to be picked up by the REC Mali, and thanks to them I could get back home to my family and friends – and more than anything, to my freedom. Once I was back in Senegal, the ENDA Youth Action group took me in and helped me start up a small trading business. I started that with less than 100'000 francs CFA (about 250 Swiss Francs), and was soon able to double that turnover and widen my circle of customers. This job makes it possible to look after myself and to support my parents in the village." [...].²⁴

B – The quality of the support given in a protective approach: CPA tools and methods

Supporting children in a CPA approach summarizes the use of several tools and methods, collective and individual, the majority of which come under Case Management, a technique favoured by Tdh in its interventions for vulnerable children or young victims.

1 – Mapping the flows of child mobility

The flow approach requires mastering the flows and the profiles of the children affected. The first task consists of establishing the cartography of the child mobility flows by means of a baseline survey to determine the routes taken by the youngsters, as well as the means of transport used, the times of mid-term transit and any other information that could improve the traceability of children on the move, so that better protection systems can be adapted and set up at the various stages. Although not fixed, these flows demonstrate, however, certain trends involving taking the same routes taken by older siblings, the chances of getting work in transit and at the place of destination, the existence of resource persons to protect and facilitate, etc. **This tool should make it possible to put a 'flow' approach into operation for protecting children on the move, based on dynamic links between the areas of origin, transit and destination.**

2 – Communication and social mediation techniques

Once the routes taken by the children have been identified, mobilizing the communities to protect children on the move represents a significant dimension in the protective accompaniment process to be set up. It is based on practical systems in the form of community-based organizations, and recommends social workers to master the implementation of communication techniques and social mediation.

The child mobility issues refer to different, or even contradictory interests that are quasi permanent between institutional actors and the communities. The social worker is firstly confronted with incomprehension related to a different perception of the place and status of a child, and the perception of his or her rights and duties, in particular that of contributing to the family's resources; so that internal or external migration is one of the strategies adopted by families, and very often by the children themselves who have accepted this social role.

Mediation in this case is founded first and foremost on awareness work based on constructive communication with community leaders, the families and the children themselves about the hazards of early or dangerous migration, plus a joint search for solutions to reduce the risks. Proposing ready-made solu-

²⁴ *Children tell their stories, Child mobility*, Site Web RAO, 2013.

tions that do not respect the values and practices of a community, without the latter having accepted the changes suggested by social workers, often leads to failure and the lack of constructive communication. This is not to say that one should not try to modify certain harmful practices, but any such change should go through with the aware and conscious support of community leaders or association representatives. The social workers should thus adopt a new position; their role is no longer only to forbid, withdraw, condemn or admonish, **but also to adopt a comprehensive approach in which they listen, understand, establish constructive communications and find solutions to suit all the different parties.** Once a dialogue is founded on mutual trust, compromises can be determined with the families concerning the age of departure, and include the designation of a trustworthy support person, the establishment of identity papers for the child, or the identification at the destination of a trustworthy landlord or guardian, or the relevant social structure. At a transit stage or at destination, mediation with employers, landlords or guardians are offered, for an improvement in the child's

living or working conditions to guarantee respect for child rights. Cooperation with the communities (families and children) is essential when tracing children on the move. The institutional actors' discourse has a direct effect on the quality of the collaboration and the possibilities of **either tracing the children or not, to protect them better.** In actual fact, making the families or children themselves feel guilty by disapproving or putting an emphasis solely on the risks of migration – without sufficiently taking into account the deeper motivation, individual and/or collective – can sometimes deprive the institutional actors of accurate information on the situation and the destination of the child. How often, if a child is taken back home but then goes away again, becomes then untraceable as the families keep quiet about the child's situation, refusing to give exact details for fear of being judged negatively.

"The key element in awareness-raising is to be clear on the fact that one does not just tell other people what to do. We want to know more about their beliefs and their practices before introducing changes that fit in with the culture and ideology of the context in which we work."

Child Protection, Manual of psychosocial training, Tdh, 2008.

Community projects based on good practices of communal protection.

The regional project for the protection of unaccompanied children (Tdh, 2013-2016) concretizes the community mobilization strategy around the protection of children on the move by setting up community projects implemented on the children's routes.

This process is based on various steps:

- *The organization of village general assemblies with the key players in the communities to brainstorm about the forms of child mobility, the risks and the existing opportunities;*
- *The identification of endogenous practices implemented by the community to protect the children at departure, in transit or at their destination;*
- *The selection of the best practices together with the communities, and their elaboration in form of community projects;*
- *The funding of community projects.*

Such a strategy, inclusive and participative, based on dialogue and social mediation, enhances the role of the communities in the protection of their children and encourages horizontal cooperation, which places Tdh's interventions at the heart of the real life of the children and their families.

3 – Empowerment

Empowerment means 'granting more power to individuals or groups so as to affect the social, economic, political or ecological conditions they experience'. Conceived as an increase in power when faced with a dominant group, the concept has gradually become used in a wider sense, closer to that of participation. In the present context, empowerment is based on gaining knowledge and know-how, but also learning the skills that toughen children, reducing their vulnerability and strengthening their resilience in any given context. The goal is for children to better protect themselves (concept of self-protection) as well as to be capable of better protecting their peers. When

protecting children on the move, this means giving children the power/autonomy to protect themselves all along their migratory paths. The level of the children's participation is based on the quality of the process of empowerment.

The psychosocial activities related to child empowerment can be realized in an individual or collective way, in areas set up in the children's living and/or working places.

²⁵ Online Etymology Dictionary de Douglas Harper.

The 'Drop-in centres' in Burkina Faso

In its Protection Programme, Tdh in Burkina Faso supports more than 1,000 domestic workers, girls who have migrated from Sourou to Ouagadougou and to Bobo Dioulasso. So as to give them a chance to meet up and to let the girls have somewhere to talk to one another, to share experiences and to evolve, several Drop-in centres have been set up in the different districts.

These Drop-in centres are held in school buildings in the various districts. The girls meet twice a month (on Sunday, their free day) for psychosocial activities, informal debates, training courses and discussions on any situations of abuse and forms of exploitation. Eleven Drop-in centres are functional today and every week an average of fifty young girls meet there for diverse activities. The girls are actively engaged in leisurely activities that they also help to organize, they share their feelings with one another, strengthen their self-esteem and their autonomy.

The centre also serves as a bridge between the young domestic workers and the various protection services (police, justice, social services, etc.). These people are periodically invited to meet the girls at the Drop-in centres to discuss ETA situations and their responses. These are moments for talking, appreciation and trust-building that allow the beneficiaries to **learn about the protection mechanisms**. The girls thus get to know these people so they can ask for help more easily.

The schools that open on Sundays to host these Drop-in centres offer a neutral context and a chance for community actors (landlords, Big Sisters, associations and compatriots) who were formerly rejected or ignored to get in touch with institutional stakeholders without fear or prejudice. During the week, these same schools become places for making the schoolchildren more aware, many of whom have child domestics at home.

The Drop-in centres constitute an important link in the system for tracing and protecting the girls. Through them, the project has succeeded in identifying and monitoring the individual situations of more than one thousand beneficiaries (census report, measured by a scale of decency, detection and reference of ETA victims with the assistance of the Big Sisters...).

Real meeting points and perfect venue for emotional gatherings, the Drop-in centres are now a pillar of the protective accompaniment strategy for hundreds of young domestics having reached destination.

(D. Fall, 2010).

The intermediary school of the Great Market in Lomé

The law for children in Togo stipulates that every child under 15 must go to school and may not go to work. In the Great Market in Lomé, many children between 11 and 14 have jobs as salesmen, porters, etc. Too old to be integrated in primary schools and too young to be apprenticed, taking these children away from their jobs without giving them alternatives for development would not be in their best interests. In order to compensate for the dearth of solutions, Terre des hommes and Aid and Action have opened an intermediary school class in the compound of the Great Market. The working children can thus attend school for several hours a day, with the second chance of being able to be integrated into the formal educational system after two years. This intermediary school class is the result of cooperation between the management of the Market (the EPAM), the Association of Salesmen and the National Inspectorate for Education. The young workers can in this way access a high-quality educational service adapted to their needs, in the heart of the Great Market. *(D. Fall, 2010).*

4 – Case management

The measures described above can help to prevent and also detect cases where children are particularly vulnerable or already victims, requiring individualized measures of protection to be set up.

As stated above, CPA is based on an approach of personalized social support to find the most appropriate solutions for the special situation of each child. Ready-made solutions should not be used. Each child case, vulnerable or at risk is unique. The ways, conditions and motivations of their leaving home, the degree of its participation in the decision to migrate, the type of activity, may, amongst other things, vary from one region to another, from one population to another, and even from one youngster to another, hence the importance of case management as a CPA tool, allowing individualized social support to assess and contribute to resolving the situation of each child.

Case management, as defined in the inter-agency paper to which Tdh is a party, is a way of organizing and implementing an intervention that adequately, systematically and within a given period fulfils a target/a project.²⁶ It is based on the methods and tools suited to the various stages of case management for a vulnerable or victimized child; on an analysis of the situation and the drawing up and implementation of a personalized plan, until the child leaves the scheme (closure of the case).

- **Listening to the child and including his or her participation.**

Listening is a crucial technique in the process of supporting a vulnerable or victimized child. At the stage of identifying the child, it enables receiving accurate information about its situation and, above all, it develops the child's sense of trust in order to communicate expectations, needs and plans. The manner and place in which the child is listened to should meet special criteria to best encourage confidence-building, to get the child's participation and establish a constructive relationship between the person that accompanies

and the person that is accompanied. The listening process in a CPA approach differs from the classic approach in that it is sustainable (not just a simple 'interrogation' to get information) and that it is part of the supporting measures that help create a more positive self-esteem in the child by strengthening its self-confidence and capacity. An interactive relationship between the children and the social worker must encourage children to build up their skills and communicate their needs whilst the social worker must be freed of preconceptions and convictions about the children's presumed situation so he or she can guide the intervention as objectively as possible. In the case of children on the move, special areas and other listening places set up along the children's routes are often the first place to meet and contact them. Depending on the quality of the operation and its cooperation with institutional services, listening to the children can later be done on the premises of the social services or an association for child protection that is a member of the local protection network.

Many tools are included in the staff interventions to encourage listening to the children and their participation. Two principal objectives are targeted: to give the children all the information they need to help them take the right decisions, and to improve the interventions aimed at protecting migrant children. The child participation techniques and tools allow learning more about the reasons for their moving, the risks they face and how these can be avoided, as well as the opportunities sought by the children. On the way we could help them reach them.

- **Resource mapping centred on the child.**

In a child protective accompaniment approach, determining the existence, nature and quality of the resources in a children's environment is an essential step. This resource mapping takes place when first assessing the children's situation, related to their family, social, professional, school and institutional surroundings. At their departure, in transit or at their place of destination, the children belong to either a family, a community, a group or a network connected to their situation. It is therefore necessary to identify the risk

²⁶ *The role of case management in the protection of children: A guide for policy & programme managers and caseworkers*, Child protection working group inter agency guidelines for Case Management & Child Protection, September 2013.

factors and the protective factors in their human environment (support persons, the people responsible for them, relationships of friendship or trust), in their living environment (housing and working conditions, network of friends and acquaintances), and finally in their work or school environment. It is also a necessity to identify the level of access and the quality of basic services from which the child could benefit. This analysis enables to assess the risks the child faces, possibly the degree of urgency of the intervention, and also the support measures to be carried out to reduce the risk factors and increase the protective factors. It is the comparison between these two sorts of factors that will guide the person giving support for the benefit of the children and their family/circle. Depending on the results of this analysis, the intervention could be carried out either to improve the community environment, or on the contrary, to improve the child's institutional protection.

• **Case planning and its implementation.**

After having listened to the child and understood his or her needs and expectations plus the standard of his or her surroundings, and after having defined the risks, the referral social worker proposes an action plan – centred on the child – that he or she is entrusted with carrying out. Such a plan, in accompanying children on the move, can be realized whilst the child is leaving, on return, or at the place of destination.

It should be noted that the PIR (project for individualized reception), just like CPA, must be very flexible and should be revised regularly so it is always suited to the child's situation. This is especially the case for children on the move, who Nelly Robin, an IDR researcher who specializes in the question of migration in West Africa, describes as children whose situation evolves rapidly during their moves, "As they are successively confronted with new vulnerabilities as well as with new chances, and these have an effect on their travels and on their initial migration plans."²⁷

PIR implementation fits into the approaches described above, and is aimed at giving an effective, multi

sector and suitable response from competent providers working coherently and responsibly. Networking is essential for this. Beyond the position of the social worker, CPA also refers to all the activities that enable to enhance protection measure, the synergy of the people able to protect, and greater accessibility for the children, families and communities.

In a process of protective accompaniment, social workers have to facilitate the resources of the systems in which they work. Even if they are the main referent for the child, they have to rely on the expertise and the human, material and financial resources in their work environment. This means that they must work in partnership with other services and organizations that possess the skills and complementary experience. **The local protection networks**, composed of community and institutional actors, are the most significant representation of the development of social work in the region, likely to take in child protection as a whole and to propose an integrated health, educational, psychological, legal or even spiritual offer through involvement at a community level.

In a process of case management, networking can help collecting information on the children and their family, facilitating access to a combined offer of service and monitoring the reintegrated children.

It can also promote the organization of case conferences for handling more complex situations, bringing together institutional actors and community actors, based on the requirements of the case to be dealt with.

²⁷ ROBIN Nelly and NDIAYE Mandiougou (2012), *Young girls and mobility in West Africa. From migration to movement*, Research, USA: Population Council, 30 p.

A test with case conferences in Burkina Faso

Tdh offers technical and financial support to the Child Protection Units in four provincial districts of Social Action for testing out case conferences through technical and financial support (funding for the case conferences and the individual action plans). During the conference, the case administrator summarized his investigations to participants from various disciplines (specialized social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists) or services (healthcare, education, law, police, prefectures, etc.), depending on the type of case. This exposé is the basis for an exchange of views that could confirm, complete, deepen or rectify his suggestions towards a plan for protection. This plan can be reassessed regularly, and readjusted through the organization of follow-up meetings after the case conferencing.

Networking, when the local networks are linked together, is also a part of establishing measures for protective accompaniment along the corridors where the children move, so as to constitute real protective safety nets and to enable the identification, support and protection of children from one place to another.

By these means a case can in fact be handled in an approach to mobility by organizing a continuum of services based on the exchange of information (and resources) between the child's referents, from one place to another.

Protection networks in a flow approach: the Vogon-Lomé (Togo) flow

In Togo, community child protection arrangements can only with difficulty be restricted to interventions geographically limited to the villages. In actual fact, a good number of children leave their villages in search of economic opportunities. This social reality must be taken into account, not by obliging the child to stay in his or her village, but rather by integrating the 'mobility' dimension into any measures for protection. This is the way that Terre des hommes decided to actively bring together all the community and institutional players who play a part in the flow of young girls from Vogon going to work in the Great Market in Lomé. On the one hand, the Village Committees for Development work together with the children, their parents, schools and the healthcare services for the improved welfare of children in the villages, in order to restrict early home leaving. Groups from the Association of Working Children and Youth in the village and in Lomé support the children in their choice of mobility, if there is a choice to be made. And finally, in Lomé, people from the same communities, the Association of Merchants in the Great Market, the Inspectorate of National Education, and the Management of the Great Market all cooperate to guarantee more protection for the children living around the Great Market (Drop-in centres, intermediate school, empowerment, etc.). The children's mobility necessitates the establishment of arrangements for protection to guarantee reduced vulnerability and to encourage their personal development wherever they are found. (D. Fall, 2010) The role of the children's organizations that Tdh sets out to make visible and active in the protection networks for children on the move, is a perfect example of the role of community-based organizations in a local protection system. Whether they are organizations of working children and youths or student clubs in their areas of intervention, they have a relationship of proximity and closeness with other children potentially at risk and who they can identify, advise and/or guide towards informal organizations (village committees, parents' associations, resource persons, etc.) or more formal ones (institutional protection services).

Listening Points for working children and youths

The AMWCY (African Movement for Working Children and Youths) numbers 132,547 official members, of whom 74% are under 18. It has 2,017 'core groups' established on numerous routes of child movement. The core groups organize awareness-raising campaigns, set up listening points, and a system of case referral, develop income generating activities with financial partners, and cooperation with local services and authorities, etc. Their practices are simple and effective and include data exchange, advice giving, leaving no children on their own or to their own device; in short, helping one another on a daily basis. This is the same principle at stake in groups of peers but on a wider scale, youngsters helping youngsters. (D. Fall, 2010). Their activities illustrate the importance of empowerment for children and youths on the move by organized groups who can help them resolve their everyday challenges: finding a place to sleep, where to eat, how to get assistance to get hold of the wages refused by an unscrupulous employer. These efforts also favour new openings with the social resources available (Guy Massart, 2007).

• **Support/follow-up/assessment/file closure ;**

Unlike the classic approach of protecting vulnerable children, especially children on the move, the child protective accompaniment approach must be founded on a systematic, regular assessment of the children’s situation by creating tools suited to the various interventions implemented. These tools should take into account the following fields of impact: access to the same rights as accompanied children, achievement of a personalized plan, the supply of available services and their quality, practice, collaboration, changes in representations.

As D. Fall (2010) emphasized, a good follow-up of the support activities can only be done by setting up an ever-evolving database that enables assessment of the real changes in the lives of accompanied children. This database gives opportunities in terms of collective monitoring with the harmonization of standard indicators for better strategic orientation and good communication on the intervention. It also offers the possibility of individual case monitoring.

For this purpose, in 2008, Tdh in Burkina Faso drew up a tool called a ‘scale of decency’ designed for migrant girls from Sourou (a region in western Burkina Faso), working as domestics. This tool enabled periodic measurement of the level of the girls’ satisfaction, and above all of the changes in their lives. De facto, it resembles a case management tool that makes it possible to adapt and re-frame the level of intervention vis-à-vis the youngsters. The tool is based on the following items:

- Wellbeing conditions at the employer’s (healthcare; food; body and clothing hygiene; attention and affection in their socialization; security in social relationships);

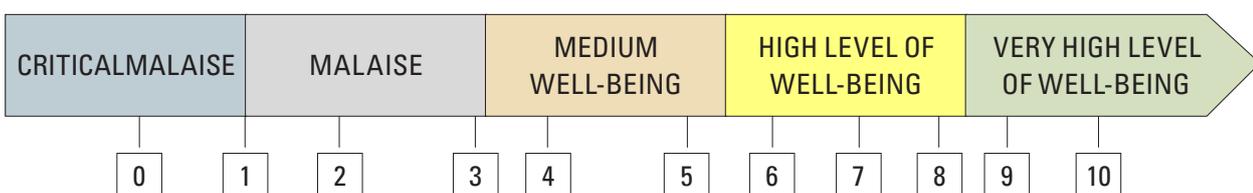
- Working conditions (level and regularity of a wage; responsibility, times and nature of the work; safety);
- Protection of rights (knowledge of the rights and duties of working children; existence of the elements for a protective environment).

The perception of the migrant girls working as domestics (MGD) is the basis of the measuring tool, which also refers to the legislation in force and the perception of the employers. The tool takes into account the best interests of the child and makes it possible for the project to determine the points to strengthen when setting up a protective environment. The monitoring process and assessment are done in the usual way, over a given period, by follow-up visits to check on the wellbeing of the youngster.

In Benin, Tdh’s protection team set up tools to measure the development of the level of the children’s wellbeing and the risk factors, called the ‘scale of wellbeing’ and the ‘scale of risks’.

- **Scale of wellbeing:**

This scale aims at assessing the status of the youngster’s wellbeing. It should be reviewed regularly and linked up with other elements of information, including the scale of risks and other regular assessments during monitoring and on behalf of the people in the child’s surroundings. The table corresponds to the chosen indicators and is systematically filled in during the first visit and before taking the decision to close the case. However the scale of wellbeing should be measured regularly during the personalized assistance, especially if there is any change in the child’s situation.



In order to consider whether a child's wellbeing has improved, it is at least necessary that the level of wellbeing determined at the first contact is higher at the closing assessment (e.g. passing from a medium state of wellbeing to a high level of wellbeing for example).

- Scale of risks:

This scale aims at assessing the youngster's risk status. It should also be reviewed regularly during monitoring, especially after any change in the place of living or in the family and/or social situation.



Supporting and protection measures are implemented according to the results of these regular assessments of the child's situation in its environment. The lower levels of the scale of wellbeing, when higher than those of the risks, should alert the social worker with regards to the frequency of monitoring visits and to the special attention to be given to a child.

When a case has been closed, a visit should be made within three months (often sooner, in an emergency situation) to check that the circumstances are stable, and to get the child's feedback and that of his or her family/guardian on the service provided (accountability survey).

Following-up a child on the move with a CPM approach represents an additional challenge, due to successive registration in various places, whether geographic, social or job-linked.





III. Operationalization of the protective accompaniment measures: challenges and opportunities.



In spite of the recorded successes, the CPA approach is still in an experimental stage and its operationalization and incremental progress requires strengthening. Its implementation in practice already makes it possible to face the challenges that have to be noted so as to identify the means of overcoming them together.

• **The lack of reliable data on child mobility in the region**

Nearly three years after the publication of the inter-agency document on mobility and the new shift in paradigm, it is striking to note the lack of reliable data on the phenomenon, in particular in terms of quantified differentiation of the various forms of child mobility along the migration routes covered by the programmes and projects of child protection agencies in West Africa. At present, official statistics issued by the States continue to focus on children who are victims of or vulnerable to trafficking, related to the projects financed by these same agencies.

It is therefore appropriate to complete the statistics related to all unaccompanied minors. Comprehensive data collection, reliable and comparative, is essential to assess the position of unaccompanied minors and to bring out responses suited to the diversity of the situations gone through by these children on the move.

Similarly, tools for assessing in a quantitative and a qualitative way the consequences – positive and/or negative – of the experiences of children on the move are underdeveloped. The feelings, speculations, life stories from here and there continue to bring in evidence of a scientific nature.

This situation hinders advocacy towards the States, regional institutions and donors to begin any real change in the perception of child mobility, and above all in the development of policies adapted to child protection.

• **The lack of clear institutional positioning on the subject of protecting children on the move**

Even if mobility can be understood in its entirety and become the object of common positions, a dichotomy seems to persist between the organizations that believe that children should be discouraged from leaving home or migrating, and those that advocate for making migration less risky. As Mike Dottridge

(2008) emphasized, several organizations that aim at putting an end to exploitation and child trafficking have not clarified whether their first objective is to stop child migration (or labour), or rather to make it less dangerous. Some partisans of the first approach (detering the children from migrating) support the view that investing in the second strategy is a mistake, as by giving the children protection during their migration is a sort of encouragement for them to migrate in the first place. At the same time, advocates of the second approach (recognizing what really happens and responding to it in the best possible way to protect and help the children) view the partisans of the first group as idealists who are not capable of protecting the children against the dangers.

In fact, as Dottridge stresses, there is no contradiction between recommending children NOT to leave school or home too early, and still to give them assistance and aid, once they have left to try to earn a living elsewhere, even though they may be only 12 or 13 years old.

This difference of approach is a challenge for the cooperation between the actors of the operational phase (phase II) of the Mobility project.

• **The shortcomings of the legal framework on the subject of protecting children on the move**

Although there is a growing awareness on behalf of the protection stakeholders that child mobility is not necessarily a synonym for trafficking, international tools for protection are still closely connected to this status. In particular, Convention 182 of the ILO and the Protocol aimed at preventing, suppressing and punishing human trafficking – especially of women and children – that supplements the United Nations Convention against organized cross-border crime, or equally the bilateral and multilateral agreements of cooperation between the countries of the ECOWAS on child trafficking.

Even after ratifying the CRC, the countries engaged in implementing all the rights acknowledged by the Convention, which implies letting every unaccompanied child benefit from the social protection system that exists for citizens, have a different reality



to show in the field, as a UNICEF study emphasizes: “[...] the absence of translating these commitments and principles directly at a national legislation level has the effect of making this protection ineffective. The main social departments consider they have no competency on the subject and that their services are limited, according to their remit, to nationals or foreigners of regular status.” (Marie Diop, 2012)

Therefore, beyond the existence of specific legislation applicable to the protection of children on the move, a further challenge is the application of the existing legislation on the matter.

• Operationalization of the cross-border approach to child protection

Unaccompanied children who cross international frontiers require appropriate mechanisms of coordination between the child protection national systems. At present time, the best operational process for protecting cross-border children on the move is that of the WAN (West African Network for child protection) which scale of action includes the 15 ECOWAS countries since 2013. This network targets underage youngsters on the move who are in trouble in a foreign country, and the purpose of the intervention is helping them to achieve social, educational and job reintegration in their country/community of origin. The network supports both institutional actors (state social services) and the local associations present in each country that work on the basis of uniformed minimum standards and harmonized procedures. The WAN and Tdh are partners in each of their countries of intervention for looking after children whose situation requires repatriation or family return.

Whatever the effectiveness of this mechanism may be, it nevertheless remains an emergency process for children in danger. It is, however, an essential link in the protection chain, but it does not allow for practical support for children on the move in an approach to prevent or reduce risks in transit or at their destination. This cross-border process of the WAN, by its composition, structuring and the quality of its coordination, could nevertheless be a basis for reflection on its evo-

lution towards a CPA approach. It is, moreover, one of the results expected from Tdh’s regional project for the protection of children on the move, implemented in five countries in the sub-region: that of developing a model for looking after children on the move²⁸, combining institutional and community levels to promote better integration to protect these children in national/cross-border policies and mechanisms.

• The traceability challenge of children on the move in order to protect them

Giving protective aid to children on the move involves acquiring the means to identify, reach out to and accompany them on their journey, anywhere and at any time.

It is certainly one of the challenges of the CPA method to identify youngsters anywhere and at any time so as to start up a protective accompaniment procedure. This assumes knowledge of the places of living and working and the movements of the children. The fundamental novelty with the CPA approach is linked to the preventative work in the living and working places of the youngsters en route and at destination. Up until now, children on the move were identified when found in two main situations: intercepted at border checkpoints or on the road, or when they have already become a victim of exploitation, trafficking or abuse. This is in line with a protection approach following a situation judged to be dangerous for the child.

On the other hand, prevention that consists of reducing the risks for the children in transit or at their destination is still underdeveloped. It assumes the establishment of systems to identify the youngsters, methods to supervise them and support them **on the spot, and above all, ways to follow their movements.** At present time, Tdh, in collaboration with community actors, can identify migrating young girls in transit or at their destination, and the Drop-in centres to assist them on the spot are examples of the CPA measures, but the challenge remains to follow the children from one place to another at all times, within the same country but also from one country to another.

²⁸ Regional Project for the Protection of non-accompanied migrant minors in West Africa (Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Mali and Togo), Tdh-UE, 2013-2016.

The traceability of children on the move also depends on the ability of the protection stakeholders to comprehend the youngsters' position in their community of origin and/or in their family, to better assess their situation and to envisage the most appropriate way to help them. This approach also requires the existence of information networks between the countries, and methods of identifying the children's families. And yet, very few organizations work both in the countries of origin and of destination, and the links between bodies for cross-border child protection remain weak.

• **The challenge of getting State actors supporting the CPA approach**

Getting the support of government actors for the CPA approach remains a challenge in the sub-region. Two main arguments appear to be the reasons for this:

1) The (legitimate) will to support and respect the national legislative framework that regulates the movement of children, access to work, and more specifically, the national laws against child trafficking, plus bilateral and multi-national cooperation agreements on the subject of combating trafficking. It is obviously not a matter of casting doubt on the pertinence of these texts to protect children from trafficking and exploitation. Nevertheless, as long as child mobility is not seen by these actors other than from the perspective of child trafficking, and pro-active measures do not permit limiting their leaving home except by prohibition or repression, it is obvious that thousands of youngsters drop through these repression nets and continue to be vulnerable and victimized.

2) The influence of donors who make their financing and technical support to governments conditional on the implementation of policies to fight child trafficking, to the detriment of policies for the protection of young migrants, and in addition only half-heartedly finance projects and programmes aimed at strengthening the protection systems that include a response for all children in trouble, including those affected by mobility. In fact, national statistics continue to issue incorrect figures, maintaining the confusion between child trafficking and child migration.

This assessment highlights the whole dimension of the advocacy that still needs to be undertaken with the States and the donors. The regional group for child protection has already done groundwork with regional institutions like the ECOWAS (likely to influence the Member States positively) on the integration of protection for children on the move into their strategy and policy²⁹.

²⁹ Regional group for child protection. Logframe for integrating protection for children on the move into the ECOWAS strategy, 2013.

- **Taking over the approach at an internal level**

Another challenge, and not the smallest, which in part encouraged the drafting of this paper, is the willingness to promote the appropriation of the CPA concept by Tdh's national delegations in the region and their staff working in protection. The use of this concept and its practical implementation in interventions (in the form of strategies and tools/methods) has up until now come up against a lack of clarity and comprehension of its theoretical content by the field teams, and its programmatic and operational implications in the context of interventions in West Africa (fighting exploitation, mobility, formal and informal protection systems, case management and monitoring, etc.). Tdh's teams refer to the CPA approach but do not as yet have sufficient understanding and technical mastery, notably in terms of accompanying, participation, community approach or system approach. They have to learn to distinguish what CPA has in common with the previous ways of intervening, how it completes them, and what it excludes/modifies in depth. The organization should thus include the appropriation of this approach in its in-service training, by making it a transversal approach included in all the protection projects in the region (in the same way as approaches based on rights or gender-equality), drawing up specific indicators to this end, and finally integrating it into the criteria for the quality assessment of its interventions.

Conclusion.

The child protective accompaniment measures, as presented in this paper, even if built with specific methods, tools and mechanisms, should be understood **less as a fixed model of intervention than as a way of thinking about child protection.** Based on respect for the best interests of every child, one must be flexible in the search for these best interests. This is certainly the strength of this approach, but also a weakness in an institutional environment that continually seeks for the standardization and systematization of interventions.

Nevertheless, and despite the challenges still to be addressed, it is clear that more and more indicators show a wider appropriation of this innovative approach and its gradual operationalization in interventions by people working for child protection in the region:

- Personalized social support and its method of case management is increasingly becoming the rule in strategies, as the inter-agency paper published in September 2013 shows.³⁰ Many protection actors, at regional and international levels, now focus on both the formal and informal dimensions of child protection mechanisms, including those for children on the move. Numerous studies and situation analysis have recently been initiated to better identify and develop the endogenous practices for child protection.
- This informal dimension of child protection is now an integral part of the analysis of child protection systems through the mapping work done in the Sub-Saharan countries.
- Through these national initiatives for strengthening child protection systems in Sub-Saharan Africa, it is more than likely that the improvement of accessibility and quality of protection services will encourage a greater demand on behalf of the children and their families, and as a result, better traceability of the children on the move.
- In Burkina Faso, the launching in October 2013 of a programme learning group, in partnership with Columbia University and the Child Protection in Crisis Network, under the leadership of Tdh, should now encourage better management of the know-how and the availability of studies and reliable indica-

tors on child protection in general, as well as on the quantified differentiation of the phenomena of trafficking and voluntary migration of young people. This programme-learning group has medium term regional ambitions.

- It is important to emphasize the advocacy work done by the Regional Group for Child Protection towards the ECOWAS, and their proposal, in July 2013, at a workshop that grouped together all the representatives of the Member States, to enrich the logical framework of the organization's Strategic Plan with an axis of child mobility broken down into 5 strategies which target is to *"make sure that all children on the move are monitored and protected during all the stages of their mobility, that they do not become vulnerable to the risks of exploitation, violence, abuse and neglect, by ensuring respect for the best interests of the child and its social, psychological and educational development."*³¹
- And finally, as Tdh's experiences in Benin illustrated, barriers relating to the legal framework can sometimes be talked over with the legitimate authorities in a search for the child's best interests. The law can be interpreted, or even circumvented, particularly if it is recognized to be inapplicable. It can be modified after advocacy and a revision process. One can also invoke other laws to justify an interpretation that seems to be more favourable to the children, and in this way escape the constraints/limits placed by a law that we see as contrary to the children's interests. The duty of a child rights organization sometimes consists of highlighting the principles, values and analysis/points of view to bring out a different logic/dimension than the legal one. However, every child protection actor must respect the laws in the country of intervention; and therefore any decision, measure or treatment that is outside the strict scope of the law must be able to be accepted and justified by the legitimate authorities.

³⁰ Child protection Working Group, Inter Agency guidelines for Case Management & Child Protection, The role of case management in the protection of children: A guide for policy & programme managers and caseworkers, September 2013.

Over five years after the beginning of the child protective accompaniment concept (2008), and its theoretical construction, this paper now wants to contribute to its operationalization in the child protection projects in this region.

However, one needs to keep in mind that the protection measures are inspired, above all, by the reality that these children and their families experience, by the evolution of the child protection issues in the region and, consequently, child protective accompaniment will therefore always be part of a procedure under construction, with the ultimate aim of best responding to the wellbeing of the children.

³¹ *Report of the workshop for training and awareness-raising related to child protection, organized for the Member States of the ECOWAS, 22-25 July, 2015*





IV. Appendix.

Appendix 1: The different stages of movement and opportunities for protection.

RISKS	PHASES IN MOVEMENT OR MIGRATION	OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROTECTION
<p>Domestic abuse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forced or early marriage • Not able or allowed to attend school • Bullied at school • Drop out of school to start work prematurely • Few or no work/entertainment opportunities near home • Family cannot afford to look after child or pressures child to start earning • Abduction 	<p>Phase 1 Home</p> <p>Child is living with birth parent or parents or others in family or family-like situations</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Socialisation 2. Learning literacy and numeracy 3. Standard school education (and protection from bullying) 4. Learning life skills 5. Sex education 6. Social centres/clubs for adolescents 7. Assistance in finding a livelihood while living at home 8. Vocational training 9. Experimenting with risks and opportunities to learn to assess risks 10. Warnings about risks such as human trafficking
↓		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Borrows money and gets into debt • Sold forged identity document • False job offer • Given false hopes or inaccurate information • falls in love with someone who intends to deceive her 	<p>Phase 2 Preparation</p> <p>Child prepares to depart (or has left home but still living near parents or relatives)</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Loans other than from loan sharks 2. Advice on legal procedures (e.g., obtaining passport, visa, etc.) 3. Advice to delay departure until older, combined with assistance allowing child to remain at home 4. Advice on how to check if jobs offers are legitimate 5. Advice on precautions to take 6. Advice on assistance from a well informed intermediary 7. Guided visits to likely destination (Feasible when destination towns are not far away)



<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Trafficker or other abusive intermediary gets control of child• Nowhere to stay• Out of contact with any relative• Stopped by police or others (possibility of ill-treatment or possessions confiscated)	Phase 3 Travel Sometimes a single journey, but often with overnight stops and transit through bus or train stations, ports or border points	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Travel with friend(s), relative(s) or a well intentioned intermediary2. Advice or assistance available at bus/train station, e.g., special information points3. Transport workers briefed to identify children in danger4. Provision of safe accommodation, food, etc.
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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nowhere to stay• False promises of reasonable job• Enslaved or told to work to pay a debt• Recruited to criminal gang• Boy-friend turns out to be a trafficker and delivers girl into prostitution	Phase 4 Arrival Immediately after arrival child has to seek lodging or somewhere to sleep, employment and social contacts to ensure survival	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Booths at station and other places of arrival, to make contact with a new arrival before individuals with criminal intent do so2. Contact with agents or network known to be safe (e.g., association from same area or ethnic group)3. Provision of short or medium-term accommodation4. Advice on legal status, employment opportunities, threats to avoid, etc.5. Assistance in finding employment6. Establishing communication with parents/home community
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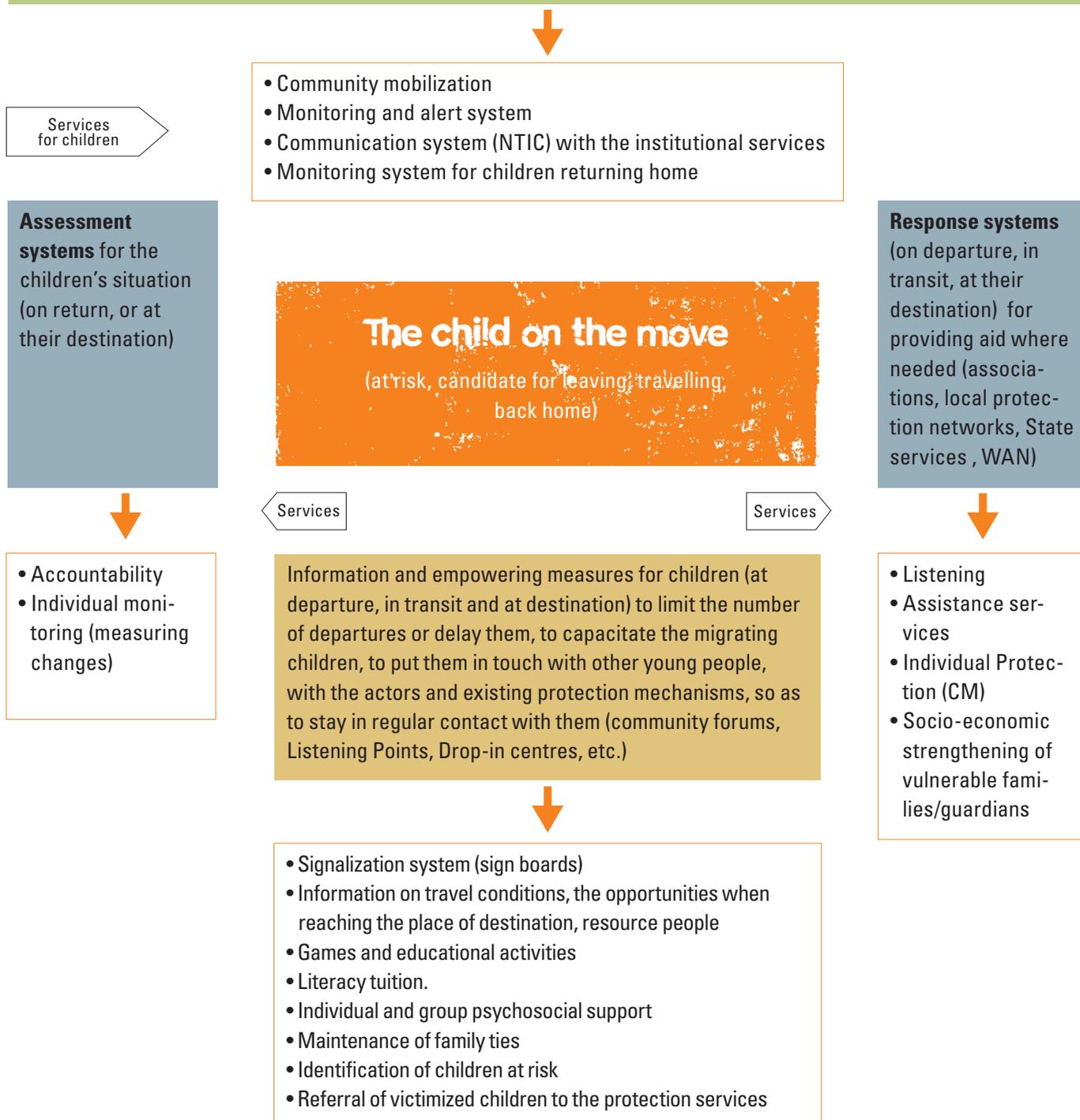
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Abuse by employer• Abuse by members of the public (for child working in the streets or in public)• Exploitation by trafficker or employer• Harsh or hazardous working conditions (with risks of occupational illness)• Child becomes ill or suffers injury• Child becomes addicted, e.g., to glue-sniffing, alcohol or drugs• Self-harm in response to abuse• Run away to live on streets	Phase 5 Working or living away from home A (relatively) more settled 'plateau' in the destination, e.g., involving employment or relatively standard livelihood	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Place limits on an employer's ability to wield total control over a child. E.g., visits by social worker, health worker, labour inspector, etc2. Drop-in centres for street or working children (including advice on drugs and sex)3. Non-formal education (NFE) classes4. Residential centres for street children who quit street living6. Contact facilitated with family at home by telephone, internet or letter7. Access to safe place to save earnings
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RISKS	PHASES IN MOVEMENT OR MIGRATION	OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROTECTION
• Similiar risks to before	Phase 6 Possibly further travel/ moves each followed by similiar efforts to find accomodation and a livelihood	Similiar protection oppourtunities to Phases 3 and 4
• Theft/extortion on the way home (e.g., by police or customs officials) • Other risks while travelling (as before)	Phase 7 Sometimes – return home...	1. Banks or savings institutions available to low earners for remittances, so they do not have to travel home with all their earnings
• Child is more now familiar with risks	Phase 8 ...Often followed by a new departure	/

Source : Mike Dottridge, 2008.

Appendix 2: Diagram of a protective accompaniment disposal for children on the move.

Monitoring at a community level (at departure, in transit and at destination) to identify the young people affected by mobility, to prevent risk situations, provide services for support and advice, refer them if necessary to programmes for accompaniment, guidance and response.



- mainly community actors.
- mainly institutional actors
- both type of actors, institutional and community.

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