Harmonizing Protection and Care for Children on the Move

Olivier Geissler - ISS Switzerland
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- Since 1924
- Part of a global network (120 countries)
- Supports children and families separated by borders facing social and/or legal issues → extensive work on children on the move
- Ca. 30’000 treated annually
- Based on UN norms (CRC) and standards and The Hague Conventions
Introduction

- Children on the move (CoM): not a new but a phenomenon of increasing global importance
- **2010**: Global Movement for Children (Barcelona)
- **2012**:
  - **GFMD Mauritius**: Civil Society Days put child migration on the agenda
  - **CRC’s Day of General Discussion Report** has set out principles on “The Rights of All Children in the Context of International Migration” → widely recognized but poorly implemented
- **2016**: the migration management crisis gives new visibility to CoM and need & opportunity to **reaffirm principles** and strengthen a **rights-based implementation** of protection of CoM
The needs of Children on the Move

Protection
- Guardianship and support in every day life
- Stable protection/residence status
- Access to rights, services and child friendly accommodation

Integration
- Stable social relations
- Education and vocational training
- Integration measures

Durable Solution
- Support measures beyond the 18th birthday
- Employment opportunities
- Long-term life project

... are universal
Issue: How can rights of CoM be safeguarded across countries?

Today’s shortfalls of protection and care of CoM

• Int. protection is emergency relief focused, short-term and centred on 1 country
• National protection systems are fragmented in implementation of child protection and care principles
• Protection measures do not sufficiently consider the individual child’s long term development and prospects
• The evolving nature of the CoM’s migration experience is neglected: absence of transnational cooperation in case management and monitoring

→ Need for harmonized protection standards and transnational case management for implementing and monitoring durable quality solutions for CoM
A transnational mechanism for protection:
The West Africa Network for the protection of children (WAN):

- **Since 2005**: First mechanism of cooperation between countries enabling protection and quality reintegration of vulnerable children across borders (mostly unaccompanied and separated children: young stranded migrants, child workers, street children, exploited children, trafficked children etc.)
- Links up the 15 countries of ECOWAS + Mauritania
- Transnational cooperation of CSOs and national, subregional and regional authorities
- 6’000 children have been reintegrated in a families or community setting
WAN Approach

• Multilevel Approach:

• 1) Direct support to migrant children
• 2) Capacity building of stakeholders
• 3) Advocacy at national, subregional and regional levels
# Common standards for harmonized procedure

8 steps to harmonized quality care for children on the move

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Identification of the child</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>Emergency care of the child</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Study of the child’s personal situation</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Tracing &amp; assessment of the family and environment of the child</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Alternatives for placement of children outside their families</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>Social and professional reintegration (individual plan &amp; support)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>Monitoring of the child after his return (2 year standard)</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>Support to build-up parental capacities</td>
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Main achievements

- ECOWAS recognized WAN as a viable mechanism for transnational protection and care of children in West Africa

- **Harmonization of practices** and establishment of regional minimum standards for protection and reintegration of vulnerable children

- The standards developed by WAN have been validated by Member States and will be integrated in early 2016 in the ECOWAS Child Protection M&E framework and in its Guidelines for implementation

- Externally evaluated by EU & SDC and identified as a good practice
Concluding remarks

• **CoM are children first and foremost** – regardless of their migration status

• **Harmonized protection standards respecting the CRC principles** are necessary to guarantee quality care and equal treatment of CoM across countries

• **Transnational cooperation** among countries is key in finding durable solutions for the transnational phenomenon of children on the move → **transnational case management**

• Each child has the **right to a durable solution** centred on his or her best interest and capacities beyond their 18th birthday.

• States should work towards strengthening COM’s **resilience** through recognizing and enhancing their potential as actors of development – both of their personal development and for the communities (gain and transfer of skills, knowledge, experiences, innovation etc.)
Thank you for your attention

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