Harmonizing Protection and Care for Children on the Move

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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
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 everyday 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>Task</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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<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.)
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