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Welcome to our 2011 Spring Newsletter. During this time, we have advocated tirelessly to establish 2 new Child Protection Units (CPU) in Albania. We are pleased to announce that one of these CPUs will be operating at the Tirana Municipality Unit No. 4, while the other one at the Commune of Levan in Fier. We would like to thank all the local partners and stakeholders for our successful collaboration on this endeavour and look forward to our joint work in making the new CPUs deliver the highest quality child protection services possible. On the other hand, our continuing cooperation with the Municipality of Saranda and the local orphanage led to the opening of a Daily Social Centre for the city's vulnerable children in April. The team of Terre des hommes (Tdh) in Albania have a simple objective – to ensure child protection at local and national levels against all forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. Of course, our work would not be possible without the valuable support of the Child Protection Safety Net (CPSN) project partners, including UNICEF and all our donors. Without underestimating the scale of the challenge, we are committed to meeting it by helping change complacent attitudes, by mobilizing children, schools and communities in playing their own part in child protection and by encouraging wide and multi-disciplinary cooperation between various local and national duty-bearers. In this newsletter issue, you can read about our efforts to focus some of the 2011 Local Elections spotlight on child protection issues through our nation-wide campaign *Children's Voice is in Your Vote*, conducted in collaboration with the BKTF Coalition (United for the Care and Protection of Children). High-profile advocacy activities include a visit by the OSCE Ambassador Eugen Wollfarth to the Child Protection Unit in Vlora and a special address by Albanian President Bamir Topi to a national conference on the occasion of the International Roma Day, organized jointly with Amarodrom (Union of Albanian Roma Minority). We are delighted to announce that thanks to our collaboration with UNICEF, the State Social Services and the Department of Social Work and Policies at the University of Tirana, work has begun towards developing an in-service training course for all child protection workers in Albania. We have supported local actors in exchanging best practices on the development of social policies based on community needs, as is the case of the knowledge exchange meeting between local government representatives of Fier, Vlora and Elbasan, at Municipality and Qark levels. We have continued to deliver trainings in Child Protection and in the Movement, Games and Sports (MGS) Methodology to a wide variety of child protection stakeholders all over the country in schools, residential institutions, partner organisations, community counselling groups, as well as parents and children themselves. We invited a guest writer from our partner, *European Movement in Albania*, to elaborate on the need for enhanced child protection in the context of the EU visa-free regime with Albania. In an effort to develop a better understanding of child protection challenges, we have undertaken two important studies: one on the phenomenon of child begging, the other one on the quality of local services by asking children themselves to assess the child protection service offered to them. We hope you will enjoy reading about all these activities, as our current efforts remain focused on supporting the Child Protection Units with their preparations for the children's summer camps in 8 regions in the country.



## 1. ADVOCACY and OUTREACH

### 1.1 Child Protection Safety Net to Extend Further

#### New Child Protection Units to Open in Tirana And Levan



☀ We are happy to announce that 2 new Child Protection Units are now being established at the Municipality Unit No. 4 in Tirana and at the Commune of Levan in Fier.

To ensure the adequate establishment and well-functioning of the CPU at Tirana Municipality Unit No. 4, Tdh has agreed to provide the CPU with vital financial and technical support during its first year with a view to building its capacity to sustain itself and its activities in the years to come. This local government structure will provide services to some of the most vulnerable communities in the capital.



The CPU in Levan will be the third such structure to be established in the region of Fier, along with two other CPUs already operating at the Municipality of Fier and at the Commune of Dermenas. In collaboration with our Tdh team in the region, the more experienced CPUs have expressed their commitment to offer support to the new CPU in Levan by providing it with technical expertise, by exchanging knowledge and best practices on local child protection issues and by sharing their network of contacts and service providers in the region.

### 1.2 Focusing The Local Elections Spotlight On Children's Issues

#### Children's Voice Is In Your Vote

☀ This was the slogan of the public awareness campaign launched by the Albanian civil society during April in an attempt to focus the electoral spotlight on children's issues as Albanians citizens got ready to cast their votes in the local elections of 8 May 2011.

Children make up nearly 1/3 of the Albanian population. Although they themselves cannot vote, their interest in Albanian local politics can be represented by the voting adults. Tdh in collaboration with the BKTF coalition (United for the Protection and Care of Children) and support from UNICEF and other partners, prepared and distributed thousands of flyers all over the country to inform citizens about the current situation, as well as policy developments towards the realization of children's rights in Albania.

The flyer encouraged all voters to actively discuss the remit of local government in establishing child-focused services and in building child-friendly communities. During the electoral campaign, voters were urged to press their local candidates with specific questions on issues of child rights and protection to ensure these issues were part of their election programs.

Children in different regions of the country were also able to lead their own advocacy activities with their own peers, parents, community members and local candidates about issues that mattered to them. Their messages were put forward to the running candidates in the form of specific requests and



■ Children's Voice is in Your Vote Flyer distributed during 2011 Local Elections Campaign

pledges that will be followed up with the winning candidates within 6 months of their being in office.

On 29 April 2011, a joint press statement urging voters and candidates alike to make children's issues a priority for the 2011 Local Elections was issued by Tdh and the BKTF Coalition. Our statement to the press was also endorsed by the American Embassy, the British Embassy and the Dutch Embassy in Albania.

Local governments are indeed important stakeholders. They are responsible for appropriately supporting and implementing local services for all children, especially those in need or at risk of abuse, neglect, exploitation and/ or trafficking. Furthermore, they can ensure that children's interests and voices are taken into account in their policies.

Despite Albania's ratification of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child in 1992, the approval of Law 10347 on the Protection of Children's Rights in November 2010 and the establishment of Child Protection Units in 28 municipalities and communes in Albania, much remains to be done in terms of further expanding and strengthening the current child protection system in Albania.

Everyone has a role to play in improving the situation. Thanks to their vote, Albanian citizens have now made their choice of local candidates, who will shape the future of all 929,000 children in Albania through the local government policies they will pursue in the next four years in office.







## 1. ADVOCACY and OUTREACH

### 1.3 Albanian President Addresses National Conference on International Roma Day

#### Children March To Raise Awareness About Roma And Child Rights




President Topi addresses conference on International Roma Day, Tirana, 8 April 2011



Children march on International Roma Day, Tirana, 8 April 2011




 Tirana, 8 April 2011: On the occasion of the International Roma Day, the Union of Albanian Roma Minority (Amarodrom), supported by Tdh and the United for the Care and Protection of Children (BKTF Coalition) organized a national conference aiming to raise awareness about Roma issues. The conference was attended by many Albanian institutional representatives, including the President of the Republic, Dr. Bamir Topi and representatives of diplomatic missions in Albania, influential international organizations and civil society actors. President Topi addressed the participants with a strong message for upholding the rights of Roma people as an important part of Albania's democratic society. He took the opportunity to once again condemn the incident of 20 February 2011 that led to serious injuries and the displacement of several Roma families and children. This episode alarmed the general Albanian public and caused the OSCE Presence, the American Embassy and the EU Delegation to Albania to issue a joint statement on 16 March 2011, urging Albanian authorities to investigate the case and provide appropriate social assistance to the displaced. The conference was followed by a peaceful march along the main boulevard in Tirana where many children, women, representatives of Roma and other human rights organizations, including Tdh and the BKTF Coalition participated. Indeed, respect for Roma minority rights cannot be fully understood and implemented without respect for children's rights and the empowerment of Roma women. At local level, Tdh continues to support the mainstreaming of child protection issues to plans of action

for implementing Albania's National Strategy for Roma Inclusion through the work of various Community Counselling Groups (CCG) operating in Durrës, Elbasan, Fier, Pogradec. The CCG have organized several awareness raising activities, training seminars and information sessions with children and Roma community members on topics as diverse as: child rights and protection, good parenting, positive discipline, child care, the negative consequences of early marriage and forced labour on the welfare and development of children, the importance of birth registration and education, etc. In addition, the CCGs have been playing an invaluable role in identifying and referring a considerable number of children in need and/or at risk to the CPUs and other local service providers. Furthermore, tens of Roma families have been referred for assistance to the Tdh partners in the field that provide conditional micro-loans to help these families generate income through small businesses in order to provide better care and education for their children.

**"...We note that Albania has formally committed itself to the objectives of the Declaration of the Decade of Roma Inclusion and ratified the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Racial Discrimination and the Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination against Women..."** read the press statement.

### 1.4 Child Begging: A Phenomenon Little Understood In Europe

#### Tdh Tasked With Conducting EU Commissioned Study In Albania And Kosovo

 Child begging, a sad and evident reality of basic child rights violations is a phenomenon little understood not only in Albania, but also in Europe. No action to tackle this persisting problem can ever be successful without first developing a sound understanding of its nature, causes and patterns. Therefore in January 2011, the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD), commissioned by the European Commission (EC) and DG Home Affairs launched a research project lasting around 15 months and covering the area of 13 member countries of the European Union, as well as Albania and Kosovo. Following a

specific methodology that combines literature reviews, direct street observation and interviews with children, families and other stakeholders, the study aims to develop an empirical and evidence-based understanding of the child begging phenomenon in order to develop appropriate policy responses at the national and European levels. Tdh has been entrusted with carrying out the research on behalf of the ICMPD in both Albania and Kosovo. The 1<sup>st</sup> research phase consisting of the national literature review and set of interviews with key institutional representatives from public and non-public authorities was completed in May.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> phase has already began and will include direct street observations and interviews with children, parents and families affected by the phenomenon. Considering the marked absence of quantitative and qualitative data on the topic, Tdh believes this study will provide a valuable insight into the nature and root causes of child begging in Albania. The study will also enable us to provide better policy recommendations for developing appropriate tools at local and national levels in order to address the detrimental effects that begging has on children's healthy development and welfare.



## 2. BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

### 2.1 Developing The First In-Service Training Course for Child Protection Workers

Department of Social Work and Policies at University of Tirana, State Social Services and Child Protection NGOs to Pool Their Efforts and Experiences



■ Dr. Dragoti at roundtable of experts, University of Tirana, 20 May 2011

“...The diversity of experiences and representation around this roundtable speaks volumes about the good spirit of collaboration between different actors,...and the enthusiasm surrounding this much anticipated initiative by the Department of Social Work and Policies at the University of Tirana (UT DSP)...,” said the Head of Department, Professor Edmond Dragoti.

Tirana, 20 May 2011: Social work professionals, university lecturers and representatives of the State Social Services (SSS), the newly established State Agency for Child Protection at the Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities (MoLSAEO) and civil society organizations working in the field of child protection in Albania were brought together in a consultative roundtable to discuss the prospect of developing a specific in-service training course for child protection workers in the country. The Department of Social Work and Policies at University of Tirana, UNICEF and Tdh, in close collaboration with MoLSAEO and the SSS, have been the major promoters of this initiative, which will establish yet another significant capacity-building stone in the country's challenging journey to develop a fully functioning child protection system. This course, unique in its own nature, “will intend to provide current professionals working as Child Protection Workers with further on-the job training by combining the latest theoretical approaches with hands-on application of common best practices, including case studies, role-play exercises and other practical tools,” said Dr. Eljona Kulluri, lecturer at the Department of Social Work. The course will cover a diversity of subjects, such as: the social constructions of childhood, the social welfare system, child development and needs, the case management process, early interventions and work with families, alternative care, international and

national legislation and policies on child rights and protection, etc. Considering the delicate nature of child protection actions in the context of abuse, neglect and/or exploitation with regard to a child's life and that of his/her family, as well as related challenges of building and maintaining trust, child protection workers must be equipped with particular skills that are warranted by sound academic preparation and continuous on-the job training.

Reflecting on past Tdh training experience, Ms. Sendrine Constant, Tdh Delegate noted: “Civil society actors have a very good picture of the various challenges faced in the field. This could serve well for developing a first-rate and comprehensive module rooted in a range of practical experiences from which child protection professionals can learn a lot.” In addition, the development of this course will be a good way of bringing the academic world of social work closer to field practice of the CPUs. The message for keeping close contact with people working in the field in order to reflect their challenges and best practices in the course subjects was reiterated by representatives of other NGOs such as Save the Children, SOS Villages, the Children's Alliance and World Vision. The process for developing the course subjects will undergo a thorough and wide consultation with relevant stakeholders. It is expected that the course will be eventually accredited as a specific requirement for all child protection workers in the country.

### 2.2 Step-By-Step Management Of Child Protection Cases

Child Protection Workers Receive Training On Assessment Process



■ Training on Assessment of Child Abuse, Mario Project, Tirana, April 2011

Tirana, 4-5 April 2011: The process of managing child protection cases requires careful and methodical step-by-step assessment of all information available and continuous collaboration with the State Social Services. This was the key message stemming from discussions at a 2-day training seminar on *Child Abuse – Assessment Process* organized by Tdh and Save the Children in the framework of MARIO Project. A total of 14 Child Protection Workers (CWP), 3 social workers and community mediators from the Drop-in Centre for Children in Street Situations in Tirana, participated in the seminar. A 2<sup>nd</sup> training on the *Process of Developing an Action Plan* will follow within 6 months. Stephanie Delaney, our international consultant designed

the modules on the basis of an earlier needs assessment. The training participants were able to examine varying conceptual definitions and theories on issues of child abuse and its common indicators, as well as explore in depth the different models of assessment and the specific steps for each model.

“...As a result of this training, I feel better equipped to structure my assessment work with children at risk according to clear models of evaluation. I trust the things I learned here will be useful to my work at the centre...” noted social worker Denita Çota.





## 2. BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY


### 2.3 Albanian Government Committed To Strengthen Child Protection In Schools

#### Tdh Releases Report On Child Protection In School



■ Roundtable on Child Protection in School, Tirana International Hotel, 30 March 2011

**“...The school is the nucleus that connects children with their family and community. As such, its role in guaranteeing a safe environment for children’s education and psychosocial development bears an immediate impact on the future of the Albanian society...,”** said Mrs. Nora Malaj, Deputy Minister of Education.

 Tirana, 30 March 2011: A national roundtable on Child Protection in Schools brought together over 30 central and local government officials, including the Deputy Minister of Education and Science, Mrs. Nora Malaj, and representatives of donor and partner organisations to the CPSN Project. The participants had the chance to share comments on the findings and recommendations of the Tdh Report on Child Protection in School. The report marked the conclusion of several child protection trainings delivered throughout February 2009 - November 2010 by Tdh, in collaboration with the Human Development Centre, to education personnel in 5 Regional Directorates of Education (Tirana, Durrës, Fier, Korça and Elbasan). Nationwide, 122 school directors, 188 school psychologists and 11 school psychologist coordinators have benefited from these trainings. Recognizing the valuable efforts of Tdh, UNICEF, Save the Children and other important partners, the Deputy Minister, of Education, Mrs. Nora Malaj stated that despite many challenges, Albania finds itself on the right track towards building a solid social and institutional basis that will address issues of child rights and protection not only within the education system, but also within the society in general and over the long term. The Deputy Minister thanked all the public and non-public actors for their efforts and commitment to strengthening child protection in the education system and expressed the willingness of the Albanian Ministry of Education and Science to endorse and implement their recommendations in the

near future.

*“...In light of our efforts to strengthen the capacity of the education system towards ensuring child protection in the school environment, we have learned that it is essential that the education personnel – from school directors to teachers, to school psychologists and their regional coordinators – are fully trained, empowered and enabled to recognize their own roles and responsibilities in using the right tools and implementing effective child protection mechanisms and policies...”* observed the Tdh Delegate, Mrs. Sendrine Constant.


Many of the participants agreed that schools should be assisted in formulating clear child protection policies, in increasing collaboration with other local child protection stakeholders, particularly the Child Protection Unit and in including more awareness raising activities on child rights and protection in their educational programs. In this context, the school psychologists should be empowered to play their crucial child protection role by better clarifying their responsibilities and by offering them proper on-the-job training, support and supervision. The need for strengthening the capacity of school psychologists was also echoed in the speech of the Austrian Development Cooperation representative, Mr. Florenc Qosja, who commended the holistic child protection approach inherent in the efforts of Tdh and its partners towards building a sustainable child protection system in Albania.

### 2.4 Strengthening Local Mechanisms Against Trafficking

#### Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees To Improve Internal Procedures



■ RAC capacity-building training Durrës, October 2010

 Throughout October 2010 - March 2011, a series of capacity-building trainings with 185 multi-disciplinary participants took place for the Regional Anti-Trafficking Committees (RACs) operating in the areas of Durrës,

Peshkopi, Vlorë, Kukës, Lezhë, Elbasan and Tirana. The Office of the National Anti-trafficking Coordinator (ONAC) organized the trainings in close cooperation with Tdh and the OSCE Presence in Albania in order to further enhance the capacities of these structures in fighting human trafficking and enhancing protection mechanisms for vulnerable groups, including children.

The RACs are working groups of public servants and civil society representatives which play a vital role in establishing local preventative mechanisms and protective measures for victims of trafficking and vulnerable groups at risk. Therefore, improved coordination and regular exchange of information between these actors is key to successfully tackling this negative phenomenon and supporting the victims.

The training modules aimed to generate constructive debate on varying technical definitions of human trafficking, as well as share and discuss best practices for improving inter-agency cooperation. Among other issues, participants highlighted the need for developing early identification mechanisms, for establishing effective local services in support of victims and persons at risk, for implementing appropriate local child protection policies and measures, for increasing collaboration and timely exchange of information with relevant actors. These trainings are expected to improve RACs’ abilities in coordinating future actions by refashioning their work and reporting processes through the development and adoption of better internal procedures and regulations, and the implementation of comprehensive work plans.



## 2. BUILDING LOCAL CAPACITY

### 2.5 Pursuing Social Policies Based On Community Needs

#### Three Regions And Municipalities Share Knowledge On Developing Social Area Plans

“...Children’s issues cannot be addressed in isolation from other local issues. For example, a program that addresses the issue of domestic violence against women will quite likely have an impact on children and their well-being and protection. Depending on the case, specific measures to protect children at risk or in need will require the involvement of a diverse range of actors, such as the family, the school, the court, the local social services department, the local police, etc. It is therefore crucial that local government identifies and takes into consideration the entire complexity of issues faced by different vulnerable groups in order to design and formulate local plans of actions that enable the implementation of social programs and services that are appropriate, complementary and cost-effective...,” said Mr. Shefki Lika, Head of the Municipal Social Services in Elbasan.



Knowledge Exchange Meeting, Fier, 29 April 2011

Fier, 29 April 2011: Tdh has been supporting the initiative of Fier Qark and Fier Municipality to bring together local government representatives at regional and municipal levels in Fier, Elbasan and Vlora in a knowledge exchange meeting in order to share best practices and discuss challenges in drafting the Social Area Plan (SAP). Elbasan’s positive experience with the SAP dates back to 2001 when the idea of establishing Regional Needs Assessment and Planning Committees was first proposed. These Committees play an invaluable role in identifying specific community needs and serving as stakeholders’ consultation forums in order to plan better local social services targeting the most vulnerable. The SAP enables local governments to formulate an all-inclusive strategy for implementing appropriate social policies and pursuing local projects in areas where these services are needed the most. This is done in coordination with a number of different public and non-public service providers in order to establish an integrated system of social policy responses suitable to the local context. The SAP presents an overall picture of the existing services in the region, whilst mapping out areas requiring new or better quality services depending on the locally identified needs. This process requires the collection of vital data and information through needs assessments conducted at local level. On the other hand, it enables local communes and municipalities to better budget their human and financial resources through a participatory approach, and it allows them to draft and submit concrete project proposals that can be financed through donated funds and/or local taxes, under Qark’s coordination. Local NGOs working on issues that represent the interests of vulnerable groups, including children, women or minorities are an important part of this process as they can help

identify specific needs and implement related projects in close cooperation with the local government structures.

*“The process of drafting a good Social Area Plan depends on the commitment of the local institutions and the civic responsibilities of all of us to respond to the needs of our community in an inclusive and equitable way, so that everyone can benefit from and access quality local services. The needs of the most vulnerable groups, in particular children, can be addressed properly only if all local actors cooperate together and coordinate their actions in an effective fashion,”* observed the Head of Regional Social Services at Elbasan Qark, Mr. Blendi Gremi.

Indeed, cooperation, coordination and timely exchange of information between different actors were highlighted as key challenges by the Vlora Qark representative, Ms. Xhuljeta Kume, who presented the Regional Strategy for Children in Vlora drafted with support from UNICEF. Other challenges raised and discussed in the course of the meeting included: the lack of specialized services, the limited geographical distribution of services, the overlapping of social policies and projects, the limited funds and other resources, the need to further build the capacities of local social administrators, etc. The Head of Regional Social Services in Fier, Mr. Astrit Hysi noted that the knowledge exchange meeting was a good opportunity to learn from the experiences of other regions in drafting their Social Area Plans in close cooperation with the local municipalities and communes under their territorial jurisdiction. In closing, Hysi expressed the commitment of Fier Qark to pursue *“social policies that are the product of a harmonized and coordinated approach between local actors at commune, municipality and regional levels in order to better serve children and other vulnerable groups in the community for the future.”*






## 3. NEWS FROM THE FIELD

### 3.1 OSCE Ambassador Visits Child Protection Unit In Vlora

#### Families Talk About The Vital Support Provided By The Child Protection Unit

 Vlora, 14 April 2011: The Head of the OSCE Presence in Albania, Ambassador Eugen Wollfarth visited the Child Protection Unit in Vlora to learn about its activities in support of children in need/at risk of trafficking and exploitation, and their families. His visit took place in the framework of a joint 6-months project (January – June 2011) between the OSCE Presence in Albania and Tdh, which led to the opening of the Child Protection Unit in Vlora back in January 2010. The project aims to strengthen the capacity of local government and other stakeholders in responding effectively to child exploitation and trafficking through the development of relevant mechanisms and prevention measures and better coordination efforts. Ambassador Wollfarth met with the Head of the Social Services Directorate at Vlora Municipality and the local Child Protection Worker, who presented him with the overall picture of the work done to date towards

identifying and managing child protection cases in Vlora, in close cooperation with the Tdh Community Youth Specialist. In addition, the OSCE Ambassador had a chance to hear directly from the families that have benefited from this project. Several parents who had come to meet Ambassador Wollfarth in person, told him about the vital support delivered to them, especially during difficult times, by the Child Protection Unit and its partners. Some parents talked about how happy they felt now that their children were enrolled and attending school, others about the critical assistance in the form of monthly food packages, basic school supplies or the counselling support that had made a difference to their lives. A single parent and main breadwinner of her family, Mrs. Diana K. expressed how she felt safer and very optimistic about the future of her daughter. Thanks to a conditional loan she was granted with support from the Child Protection Unit,




OSCE Ambassador Eugen Wollfarth visits CPU, Vlora, 14 April 2011

she had started her own business and was generating enough income to support her family and invest in her daughter's education. Touched by these accounts, Ambassador Wollfarth expressed his willingness to continue supporting the good work of the CPU in Vlora in order to assist more children and families in the future.

### 3.2 Helping Communities Protect Their Own Children

#### Daily Social Centre Established At Saranda Orphanage

 Saranda, 20 April 2011: Recognizing that no single agency has the knowledge, skills and resources to address the complex needs of children in vulnerable situations, the Child Protection Unit teamed up with the Saranda Orphanage to establish a Daily Social Centre in the community, with support from Saranda Municipality, Tdh and UNICEF. The inauguration ceremony was attended by many children, parents, community members, local government representatives and partner organisations.

Situated within the premises of the Saranda orphanage, the Daily Social Centre will provide vulnerable children in the local area with daily hot meals and a safe environment where they can play, socialize, do their homework and receive various forms of support and counselling from the professionals working at the orphanage and the Child Protection Unit. The persons who can seek support at this Centre are expected to be local children between the ages of 5-14 years old, who lack adequate parental care, have abandoned or are struggling in school, are living, working and/or begging in the street, and in general, children who are deprived of basic food, medical care and fulfilment of other psycho-social needs. The families of these children

may also request support at the Centre in terms of information and enquiries on accessing local services, on receiving social and economic assistance and referrals to the Child Protection Unit and other social services providers in the community. The Daily Social Centre in Saranda will be operating 5 days per week from 8.00-16.00. Within week two of its operation, already a group of 12 children in street situations were given care and support at the Saranda Daily Social Centre.

This initiative is an inspirational and heart warming example of what happens when a local community cares, and various local actors from the public and private sectors respond creatively and pro-actively to the child protection needs identified in their community. Centres such as this are critical in addressing the complex socio-economic needs of children and families who fall prey of vulnerable situations because they are offered no other alternatives. Providing support for vulnerable children and their families in this way is the classical example of ensuring child protection at the local level in an integrated and sustainable way. Tdh and its partners are very proud to support this initiative in the context of our larger goal of developing a functional child protection system in Albania.



Inauguration of Daily Social Centre, Saranda, 20 April 2011





## 4. GUEST EDITORIAL



### New Dynamics Generated By Visa-Free Travel For Albanians In Europe



#### Calling On The Need For Enhanced Child Protection

by Blerta Hoxha,  
European Movement Albania

As of 15 December 2010, Albanian citizens holding biometric passports have been able to travel visa-free in the Schengen zone, following intensive reforms over the last 2 years by the Government of Albania to increase the security of identification documents, border controls and fight organized crime and illegal trafficking. The EU decision to lift the visa regime with Albania put an end to the rigid almost Kafkaesque sense of isolation that burdened Albanian citizens, both morally and financially.

It goes without saying that despite the obvious benefits of free movement for Albanian people in general, the visa-free regime and its consequent ease of travel is likely to increase the instances of illegal migration and trafficking. This in turn can adversely affect the vulnerability of certain groups of people, such

as women and children, who may be exposed to potential risk situations that include forced labour, begging, prostitution and other severe forms of exploitation and trafficking.

Therefore, state institutions in collaboration with non-state actors should carefully explore the potentially negative consequences of the new visa-free regime. Regular and enhanced monitoring can help ensure that vulnerable children who already face risk situations in Albania are not endangered further as a result of cross border criminal activities that could occur more easily under the new visa-free regime. Nonetheless, the first European Commission Assessment on the effects of the visa liberalisation process with Albania and Bosnia and Herzegovina, to be issued in June 2011, is expected to shed more light on the situation and encourage future policy analysis. In addition, it should not be assumed that an analysis of the effects of visa liberalisation policy can help improve the likely difficult situations that vulnerable groups, especially

children, have to face. At most, such analysis can serve as a good indicator for pursuing sustainable development policies and revising existing policies in a way that the risks of exploitation are reduced. In this context, protection issues for children and other vulnerable groups should inform the efforts of all public and non-public authorities in revising policies in accordance with the needs of children and other vulnerable groups for enhanced protection.

Furthermore, the availability and dissemination of correct information on the benefits and obligations deriving from the short-term visa free travel is important for all citizens. In this regard, the *European Movement Albania* and its partners, including Tdh in Albania, have launched and conducted a number of information campaigns targeting business people, youth organisations, students, people living in rural and isolated areas of the country, etc.



## 5. MOVE PROJECT UPDATES

### 5.1 Psychosocial Activities

#### 5.1.a Albanian And Italian Animators Facilitate Joint Activity For Children With Disabilities



■ Osvald facilitating a game with school children, Durrës, 11 April 2011

🏐 Durrës, 11 April 2011: Osvald Termalaj, a school psychologist and MOVE animator teamed up with two Italian animators to conduct a psychosocial activity with about 100 pupils of 6th, 7th and 8th grades at the *Kushtrimi i Lirisë* school, including children with physical disabilities.

The aim was to make every child feel equal and integrated, by facilitating popular psychosocial games such as *The Mirror* or *the Blind Train*.

The activities ended with sessions of relaxation and feedback, and medals of participation distributed to everyone.

*"Games and sports have a magic effect... they immerse you in precious moments that help you forget a painful reality. Weeks ago, I had a discussion with my Italian counterparts about organizing an activity with children with special skills and disabilities in my school. I am really happy we did it, and I realized that we should continue to work together as animators to learn from each other in supporting children better. The MOVE training has served me well in this regard," said Osvald reflecting on this experience.*



The MOVE Project is currently being implemented by Tdh in Albania, Moldova and Romania thanks to financial support from UEFA. Based on experiential learning and participatory approach, the project aims to enable children's psychosocial development through games and sport. For more information, please check out the following link: <http://tdh-childprotection.org/projects/move/>





## 5. MOVE PROJECT UPDATES

### 5.1 Psychosocial Activities

#### 5.1.b Children Narrate Their Experience Of Psychosocial Games



Kindergarden children playing the Jungle Game, Durrës, May 2011

Children are very good at expressing the way they feel. The following offers a small glimpse of the sheer fun, joy and enthusiasm they experience when playing psychosocial games:

“It was so funny...we kept giggling and laughing while passing the ball to each other during the Jungle Game,” says Qyqe, 11 years old.

“Usually boys play football by themselves and that is not fun. I like Fair-Play Football better because the boys keep passing the ball to me and the other girls, and we end up having lots of fun that way...” notes Emine, 12 years old.

“When I was playing the Witches, I liked the part when we had to unfreeze each other with hugs after the witches had frozen us into place. I felt so happy whenever I had the chance to hug someone and unfreeze them... it was as if I was hugging and helping a dear person in my family,” expresses Sara, 10 years old.

And Aida, 10 years old: “Here we play as girls and boys together, while in our neighbourhood we play separately... Here we have to work together and help each other... Also, in the end, we talk about what we should do differently next time. I have told my friends at the neighbourhood about these games and I feel really proud that I have taught them to play some of these games.”



A boy expressing in painting: “I Love MOVE games very much” at the end an activity.

### 5.3 Capacity Building

#### 5.3.a Second And Third Waves Of Animators Embrace MGS Methodology



New Animators at the end of training day, Korça, April 2011

“[The MGS Methodology] has helped me shift my approach towards the nature of games. Before games were simply about competition and winning, now their focus is about helping the development of children and encouraging them to cooperate with one another,” observed Bruna, a teacher from Durrës speaking to her trainers about the value of MOVE Training.

She was part of the 2<sup>nd</sup> wave of MOVE Animator trainings that concluded in Korça in early April. Alongside 65 new animators, she joined the group of professionals and volunteers using the MGS Methodology as a tool for enhancing the psychosocial development of children. The 3<sup>rd</sup> and final wave,

launched in early May is expected to involve at least 60 new trainees and will conclude in July. The training participants come from various local institutions and NGOs in Durrës, Fier, Vlora, Gjirokastra, Saranda, Elbasan, Tirana, Pogradec and Korça, thus reflecting a variety of professional backgrounds, including kindergarten educators, teachers, school psychologists, social workers, custodian teachers in orphanages and residential institutions, community counselling group representatives, volunteers, etc. These trained animators are a valuable resource to draw from in terms of conducting psychosocial activities with children on a weekly basis and during the forthcoming summer camps.

#### 5.3.b Animators Throughout Regions Meet To Share Experiences And Challenges



Animators at the bi-monthly meeting, Durrës, April 2011

A series of 6 consultative bi-monthly meetings took place in April between animators, who were trained during phases I and II and are currently working in the regions of Durrës, Fier, Elbasan, Korça, Saranda and Tirana. Facilitated by local teams of trainers, these meetings brought together around 80 animators out of the 120 trained so far. The aim was to put them in touch with one another in order to share their knowledge and experience of implementing the MGS Methodology, as well as reflect on challenges and successes to date. Utilizing MOVE's own introduction games, the meetings fostered good group dynamic and spirit. “The children do not only enjoy the games, but they also learn a great deal through them. The feedback is very

important because it helps discover what they liked or not, who was being honest, who was respecting the rules, etc.,” shared Tina, a teacher with her group. On the other hand, Arbi observed: “Facilitating a Fair Play Football game was quite challenging during the camp because the kids simply could not imagine the game without a goal-keeper...Football is traditionally considered the boys' game, so the boys resisted the idea of playing with the girls at first. However, progress was made with each mini-feedback session as we discussed the ways to help the girls score or make the game better.” As follow-up to the meetings, the animators agreed to organize joint activities with children in future occasions on Children's Day and the International Day against Child Labour Exploitation.



## 5. MOVE PROJECT UPDATES

### 5.3 Outreach & Advocacy

#### Reaching Out To University Students And Lecturers



■ MOVE Project Introduction Workshop, University of Tirana, 9 May 2011

🏀 Tirana, 9 May 2011: The MOVE Project team held an introduction workshop on the MOVE Project and the MGS methodology with about 30 senior year students studying social work and policies at the University of Tirana (UT). Combining a PowerPoint presentation with psychosocial games, the feedback process and a questions and answers session, the workshop aimed to impart

the idea of utilizing psychosocial games as a useful tool towards improving children's development and general well-being, when working with them.

So far, 20 bachelor and master level students at the UT Department of Social Work and Policies (DSWP) have benefited from the MOVE training in the MGS Methodology, whereas about 16 lecturers and professors are expected to undergo such training in July. These activities are part of our larger efforts to bring the MGS Methodology closer to the academic world and introduce it to the social work university curriculum thanks to the good spirit of cooperation between Tdh, the DSWP and MoLSAEO. On the other hand, our aim is to make the MGS Methodology part of the social work practice with children that is delivered by professional and volunteer staff in daily centres, schools, kindergartens, residential institutions, etc.



“...I personally found the workshop very interesting and useful, and will encourage all my students to benefit from the full training package...,” said Mrs. Irida Agolli, Lecturer of Social Work with Children at University of Tirana.



### 5.4 Our Future Plans

During June-August 2011, the MOVE/Tdh team of Albania, in cooperation with national and regional partners will:

- 🏀 Finalize the 3rd and final Replication Phase, thus reaching our overall objective of 180 animators trained in the MGS methodology.
- 🏀 Provide continuous trainers-to-trainees coaching to ensure quality skills development.
- 🏀 Provide support for training and coaching of animators who are selected to work in the forthcoming summer camps.
- 🏀 Increase the capacity of current MOVE trainers in helping animators become trainers to ensure future sustainability.
- 🏀 Collaborate with local partners in organizing joint psychosocial activities with children.
- 🏀 Continue cooperation with University of Tirana towards integrating the MGS methodology in the social work curriculum.
- 🏀 Restore and renovate selected sport fields and premises for children in the regions where we operate.

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If you would like to contribute, comment or subscribe to our newsletter, please contact the editor:

Tana Lala-Pritchard

Strategic Communications Officer

Email: [tana.lala@tdhalbania.org](mailto:tana.lala@tdhalbania.org)

#### Terre des hommes Albania

Rruga “Faik Konica”, Vila 19

PO Box 7426, Tirana - Albania

Tel/Fax: +00355 (0) 4 237 444 5

Web: [www.tdh-childprotection.org](http://www.tdh-childprotection.org) and [www.tdh.ch](http://www.tdh.ch)

Email: [info@tdhalbania.org](mailto:info@tdhalbania.org)



■ The Team of Terre des hommes Albania Staff Retreat, December 2010