MyDestination App: online tool to collect testimonies of children on the move
WEBINAR SUMMARY
June 8, 2016

I. Expert

Elisa Buccolini: develops, designs and produces communication strategy, tools and products for Terre des Hommes’ Destination Unknown Campaign and for the Children Win Campaign.

II. Background

Mrs. Buccolini began her presentation by stressing that MyDestination App was developed in the framework of the Destination Unknown campaign, launched by Terre des Hommes in 2012 to protect children on the move.

The App is a child-friendly tool for children on the move to visualize their stories on a world map online. It also aims to create a database of stories to advocate for policy changes and raise awareness about the phenomenon on children on the move. The app aims to reveal to the general public the different routes that children come through and the risks that they experience, hoping that this will determine more people to support a campaign for change. Currently, the app covers 50 countries in 10 regions and involves 4 campaign members.

The app wants to encourage children to use technology and give them a voice. It also aims to present storytelling to them as a game, by using more visual content than written one, in order to avoid language barriers. The app has icons that are intuitive and child friendly. It helps children visualize their future and a better life, by encouraging them to determine where they ultimately want to go. The children can see others’ stories as well. In the boxes that sometimes appear on the screen, the child can write in their own languages. It is up to the staff to translate in French for advocacy and awareness purposes. There is no age limit in the app itself.

It is used by the children only with the assistance of social workers or psychologists, as it was conceived as part of a broader management system, where child participation is just one element of the process. Some of the ultimate goals are to help children process their traumatic experiences and to facilitate an exchange between them and the social workers. The app has a technical guide on its use and sign up as well as on the child protection system in general.

III. Demonstration of the app’s use

Mrs. Buccolini subsequently proceeded to showing the participants how the app works by logging in. The only individuals, who can login are social workers/psychologists, who are supervising the children using the app. The app can be re-enter as many times as wanted and children can amend their stories, by adding or taking out information.

The expert logged in as a young Somali refugee, who has practically become an ambassador for the campaign for over two years and has just finished writing a book about his experiences. In order to maintain the children’s anonymity, the first question asks for a nickname, not the child’s real name.
She explained on the map how the children use the app and recreate the young refugee’s entire journey from home country to country of destination as well as dream country. At the end, a summary of the children’s stories can be provided to have a quick overview of their journey.

This is the app’s first development and feedback was encouraged to improve it and its use. The app will be tested in the field, by social workers and psychologists as well as children, in order to determine what the second development phase will look like. Stephanie Delaney suggested that the children’s age could be added on the map.

In reply to questions about limitations of using the app, Mrs. Buccolini stressed that an Internet connection is needed, as the app is based on Google Maps, which might be inaccessible to some interested in using it.

Finally, she stressed that social workers and psychologist can obtain a username and password only by request, by sending an email to either elisa.buccolini@tdh.org or info@destinationunknown.org.