# BEYOND TRAFFICKING

THE RE/INTEGRATION OF TRAFFICKED PERSONS IN THE BALKANS 2007-2014



#### Life beyond trafficking The re/integration of trafficked persons in the Balkans 2007-2014

This publication exists also in Albanian, Bosnian, Macedonian and Serbian

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#### Author Geoff Meade

Coordination Gerrit Rauws *King Baudouin Foundation* Fabrice de Kerchove Ann Nicoletti

*Graphic design* Tilt Factory

*Lay-out* Tilt Factory

*Photos* Fabrice de Kerchove. Atina (p.26), Different and Equal (p. 36).

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#### FOREWORD

#### INTRODUCTION

#### THE START

#### AIMS

IDENTIFYING EFFECTIVE, HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED MODELS OF RE/INTEGRATION OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

PAGE 12

SUPPORTING PROGRAMMES FOR SUSTAINABLE RE/INTEGRATION OF TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

PAGE 14



BUILDING NGOS' ABILITY TO PROVIDE RE/INTEGRATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT

PAGE 26



ENCOURAGING COOPERATION AND SYNERGIES WITH GOVERN-MENT SERVICES AND NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISMS

PROMOTING RE/INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES TO CONTINUE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE KBF AND GIZ GRANT PERIOD

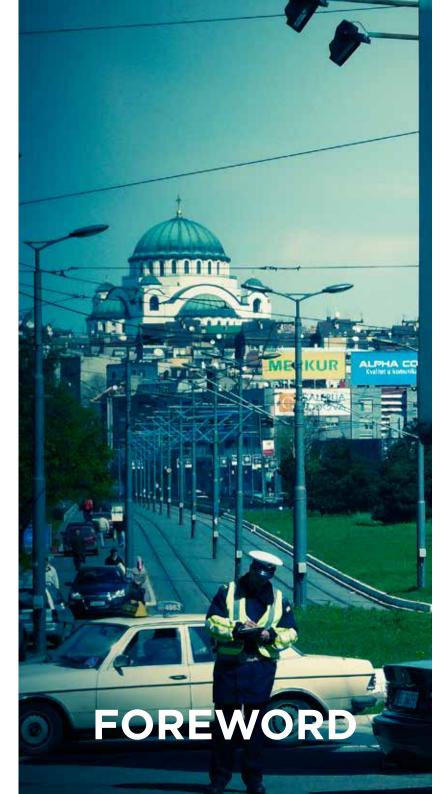
**KEY ELEMENTS FOR SUCCESS** 

**ISSUES FOR THE FUTURE** 

LEARNING MORE ABOUT TVRP

LIST OF TVRP PARTNER NGOS





"My current situation is far away from my past experience. It's something completely new. Currently, I live independently in an apartment... I work at a full time job... I have a monthly salary that helps me satisfy my needs. Currently, the thing I love most in my life actually is my job. (...) With [the organisation's] support, my life changed a lot and I had obvious progress in almost every dimension of life. I just have to keep that in mind and do my best. I will never forget how much I suffered. This is the first time in my life that I have started to think about my future. For the first time I believe I can do things on my own (...). I suffered a lot and it was so difficult for me to achieve this stage, whereas [the organisation] taught me to feel empowered. That's why I am telling you that my life changed a lot. I am so happy".

"Nadja", from Stip, Macedonia

The King Baudouin Foundation has been active in the anti-trafficking field since 2003 with a clear focus on the assistance to victims, the protection of their rights and their social inclusion. Despite recent progress in the prosecution of traffickers, victims' identification and assistance remain underconsidered aspects of the anti-trafficking response in Southeast Europe.

And yet one way to break the vicious circle of trafficking is to go beyond direct and short-term assistance to victims and invest in their longer term socio-economic inclusion and a healthy family and social environment. To this end, in 2007 the Foundation set up the **Trafficking Victims Re/integration Programme (TVRP)** which funded re/integration schemes in seven countries of the Balkans. Between 2007 and 2014 grants totalling 1.5M€ were awarded

to 15 NGO's working with trafficked persons to recover and move on with their lives. As a result, more than 1700 trafficked persons and their families throughout the Balkans benefitted from such tailor-made inclusion programmes.

Beyond assistance, one of the main achievements of the TVRP has been to build a common understanding of the highly complex undertaking that is re/integration. This has involved cooperation and collaboration amongst partner NGOs employing a variety of professional practices and working in different contexts and with a range of challenges. Numerous regional workshops, peer learning opportunities and exchanges of practices led to mutually developed tools including quite critically the development of tools to monitor and evaluate individual re/integration plans and services and to strengthen

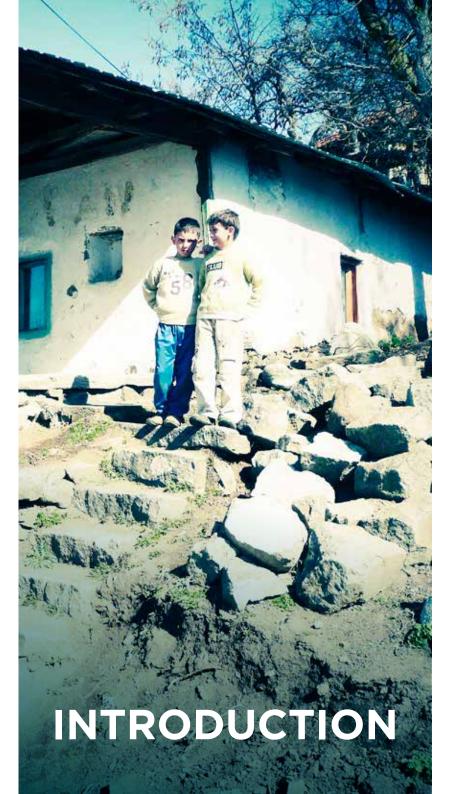


professional skills while meeting international standards of care.

This booklet aims to highlight the main results and impact of the TVRP in the lives of trafficked persons as well as more generally in the field of re/integration in the Balkans. It summarises the results and impact of the TVRP assessment conducted in 2014 through interviews of beneficiaries. partner NGOs, experts and government officials as well as other sources of data. It is our hope that the lessons, testimonies and experiences outlined in this booklet will contribute to open new perspectives and practices in the re/integration of trafficked persons.

The King Baudouin Foundation would like to express its gratitude to the author of the booklet Geoff Meade, as well as to Rebecca Surtees, of the NEXUS Institute, for drafting the impact assessment on which this summary is based and for her insightful advice on the design and monitoring of the TVRP. Sincere thanks also to the partner NGO's in the seven countries for their commitment and professional skills. The Foundation has been proud to support and partner with them. Thanks are also due to the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) which has, since 2011, been co-financing the TVRP.

King Baudouin Foundation April 2015 ONE WAY TO BREAK THE VICIOUS CIRCLE OF TRAFFICKING IS TO GO BEYOND DIRECT AND SHORT-TERM ASSISTANCE TO VICTIMS AND INVEST IN THEIR LONGER TERM SOCIO-ECONOMIC INCLUSION.



Human trafficking is nothing new. It takes many forms and claims many victims. And it has been prevalent for years, not least in the Balkans.

Efforts to tackle this worrying problem are also nothing new. Millions of euros have been spent by donors funding anti-trafficking programmes.

But it was the relative lack of comprehensive and long-term re/integration services for the victims which prompted the King Baudouin Foundation (KBF) to launch the Trafficking Victims Re/integration Programme (TVRP) in 2007. The aim was to focus on long-term programmes to help trafficking victims recover and move on with their lives and reintegrate into their families and communities.

KBF stepped in with funding for the few NGOs already working on providing re/integration assistance to trafficked persons, and by 2011, the results had inspired the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) to sign on as a programme co-funder.

The results of the TVRP are now set out in a major study based on interviews with programme partners, government officials and trafficking victims. The aim is to raise awareness of the TVRP story, sharing best practice with others involved in re/integration work. KBF hopes it will be used as a model to follow for professionals, experts, governments and national and international organisations prepared to take up the challenge of supporting the re/integration of trafficking victims and continue what began in 2007.

The findings catalogue the successes and also reveal areas where more needs doing in terms of the re/integration response from governments and civil society. Crucially, the results leave no doubt that the TVRP has filled a glaring gap in the Re/integration response in the Balkans and forged a workable model of long term and comprehensive re/integration for such urgently-needed work in the future.

At the start, in 2007, there was no re/ integration example to follow: governments in the region had, and still have, other budget priorities and the issue of human trafficking (particularly of their own nationals) was a new one to be addressed, amidst a raft of other pressing social and economic issues. But slowly a model emerged for supporting and empowering trafficking victims, with results to encourage the faint-hearted and prompt governments to reconsider their roles and priorities. Today re/integration organisations in the Balkan region are highly skilled. They work closely with governments, coordinating efforts for better results, and follow a TVRP re/integration formula that is now the backbone of the work of NGOs and their partners. The hope is that funding for re/integration, while still largely from international donors, will increasingly be backed up by governments, spreading the financial burden of a scheme the TVRP experiment proves can have lasting benefits.

THE RING

10

A common set of TVRP partner re/ integration services has been vital throughout, including safe and affordable accommodation, medical assistance, psychological support, legal assistance, education, material assistance, vocational/professional training, economic development/ opportunities, family mediation and counselling, case monitoring and follow-up; and support to secondary beneficiaries (i.e. victims' families).

The TVRP exercise identified three distinct phases of re/integration over a period of three years: crisis intervention (0-3 months); transition (4-12 months); and re/integration/ social inclusion (13-36 months). The timeframes varied for different organisations and individuals, but all agreed that assistance should be

comprehensive and long enough to allow for recovery and re/integration into the family and community.

#### **THE START**

KBF's starting point was that re/integration services are fundamental to trafficking victims' ability to recover and find their place in society again. It was clear that no short-term remedy would work - a long-term and complex programme was needed, involving on-going services to support the re/integration of formerly trafficked individuals.

The aim was to finance programmes fostering sustainable re/integration, boost NGOs' capacity to provide re/ integration services and support, and encourage cooperation with government services and national referral mechanisms.

The working method was calculated to act as a spur for effective, human rights-based re/integration programmes to be continued long after the TVRP ended.

Gradually, as the TVRP progressed and adjustments were needed, a mosaic of linked strategies took shape, from funding of re/integration services to mentoring and technical assistance, to regular TVRP partner meetings and seminars on the work,



plus a series of benchmarking papers to exchange experience and ideas about daily re/integration work - its problems and solutions - on the ground.

KBF ran the TVRP from 2007 to 2011 in Albania, Bulgaria, Macedonia, Romania, Serbia and Kosovo, with grants to nine different NGOs. GIZ joined KBF as co-funder from 2011 to 2014, with grants in that period to eleven NGOs in Albania, Bosnia-Herzegovina, Macedonia, Serbia and Kosovo<sup>1</sup>.

And the results have been impressive: more than 1,700 trafficking victims of different forms of exploitation have been helped during the TVRP's run, and approximately 60% of them were successfully reintegrated.

The numbers receiving help may not sound big, but the results of the KBF total investment of more than 1.5M euros, delivering high-quality, sustainable, re/integration support, were impressive enough to prompt GIZ to add funding of 500,000 euros. Between them, KBF, GIZ and their NGO partners in the region have made the case for re/integration programmes, and would like to see governments take on more of the burden, because there is now a critical mass of achievements and results to show the value of continuing this work.

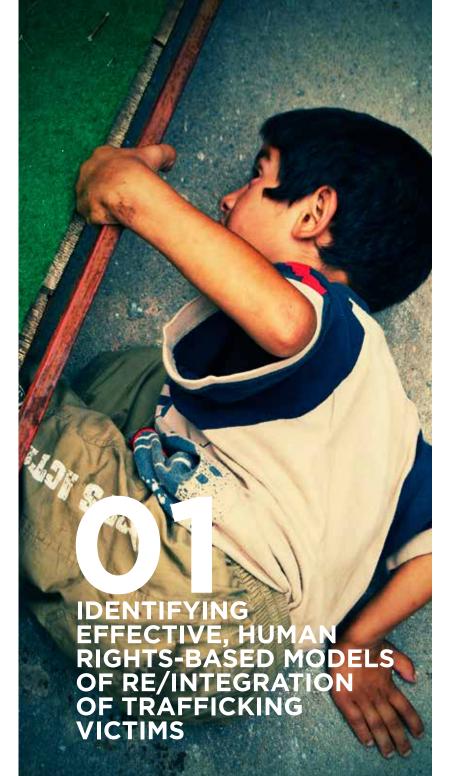
Along the way there were inevitably reversals and failures, but the results were broadly in line with expectations, with heart-rending tales from victims themselves reinforcing the message that the work is worthwhile and far from complete.

#### AIMS

The aims of the TVRP pioneers were clear. They wanted to create a sustainable re/integration programme partly by reinforcing NGOs' ability to offer services and victim support, ensuring the highest-quality re/integration support for victims of trafficking. At the same time they wanted to boost strong relationships with government services and get the public sector more involved in re/integration plans centred on human rights.

And, crucially, the aim was to build something effective enough to prove its worth and endure beyond the lifetime of the TVRP initiative.

This designation is without prejudice to positions on status and in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence.



#### TRAFFICKING IN MANY FORMS

Most programmes in the Balkans initially focused on assisting women and girls trafficked for sexual exploitation through a shelter-based approach. But other forms of trafficking and groups of victims have gradually emerged, including men and boys trafficked for labour or sexual exploitation and people living on the street trafficked for begging, street selling and criminality.

The TVRP's main achievement has been to make re/integration support available to all such groups, tailored to meet their individual needs and situations. The programme also offered flexibility to respond to new problems and to fund pilot projects for different types of victims or forms of trafficking as new situations arose.

But there are challenges to working with mixed populations in terms of re/integration, and care is needed in assessing if, when and how re/integration is undertaken in such cases. Some organisations working with street children highlighted that this target group is, in some ways, unique in terms of re/integration needs, and in terms of the extent to which successful re/integration is possible. Funding different models of care has been an important part of the TVRP learning process – identifying the strengths and weaknesses of different approaches and funding a variety of programmes to re-integrate the widest range of victims.

This meant supporting accommodation-based programmes at different stages of re/integration (e.g. shelters, semi-independent living, transition housing) as well as non-residential approaches such as day centres and field support teams.

#### A SHARED DEFINITION OF RE/INTEGRATION

Re/integration refers to the process of recovery and economic inclusion following a trafficking experience. Successful re/integration includes settlement in a stable and safe environment, access to a reasonable standard of living, mental and physical well-being, opportunities for personal, social and economic development, and access to social and emotional support. It may involve returning to one's family and/or community of origin; or integration into a new community and even in a new country. A key measure of success is the empowerment of trafficked persons to become independent, self-sufficient and actively involved in their recovery and re/integration.



#### **PRIMARY BENEFICIARIES**

The goal was to provide help for trafficking victims primarily through grants to NGOs, fifteen of which in seven countries received funding to provide support. As a result, a total of 1,731 trafficked men, women and children were helped under the TVRP between 2007 and 2014.

The majority were women trafficked for sexual exploitation, but some men and boys trafficked for the same purpose also received assistance. Re/integration services were also provided to women, men and children exploited for various types of labour such as domestic work, construction and agriculture, and others trafficked for street-selling and begging, drug distribution and petty crime. In some cases, victims suffered multiple forms of exploitation.

Interviews with some trafficking victims confirm that comprehensive long-term TVRP support to individuals facing many different re/integration challenges was a lifeline at a very dangerous, difficult and confusing time. Some had no family or friends, and many said they would not have survived without the intensive, comprehensive and long term services offered through TVRP organisations (see box).

### WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF YOU HAD NOT BEEN ASSISTED?

"I would have lived on the streets. I would beg and steal. I would be in a bad crowd. Maybe I would try drugs, who knows? Maybe I wouldn't be alive right now." (Woman trafficked for forced begging)

"I could have lived with my mother but without money, documents and advice, I would again find a man just to support me and maybe everything would be the same." (Woman trafficked for labour and prostitution)

"I would probably fall into severe depression, I think. I was isolated without connections with other parts of the world. I would survive without assistance but that would be very hard." (Woman trafficked for prostitution and labour)

But the extent of re/integration services was not always enough to tackle the many complex needs of victims. And it is recognised that successful re/integration often involves assistance for months and even years. The toughest cases included families with dependent children, those facing disabilities or drug abuse problems, mental health issues or serious medical conditions, while others lacked documents, legal status, or had no family support or social support.

The TVRP contributed significantly to the overall re/integration response, with an average of 26% of victims identified by national governments across the region receiving assistance through the TVRP – and a much greater proportion in some countries.

#### SECONDARY BENEFICIARIES

The TVRP also supported over 1,190 "secondary beneficiaries", namely members of victims' families – a vital target group as re/integration is closely linked to the broader family environment.

"Secondary beneficiaries" fall into three main categories - the children of trafficked parents; the parents of trafficked children and the husband or wife of a trafficked spouse.

16

From 2010, the TVRP focused more on identifying and re-integrating trafficked men and boys (up from less than 10% in 2007 to 21.6% in 2014). Before then few donors would fund this neglected category of trafficking victims, and governments failed to identify and refer cases of trafficked men. Yet trafficked men and boys need re/integration support just as much as female victims: services from TVRP-supported organisations was often the only source of help for these men and boys trying

#### SUPPORTING "DIFFICULT" CASES

"Kara", a child when trafficked, was diagnosed with a "mild mental disability". Her family was unable to provide her with the care she needed, including money to pay for the medicine she required. State social services refused to accept responsibility for her case because she was "too difficult" and the available government centres for persons with disabilities were inappropriate as they help those with more severe disabilities. A re/integration organisation took on responsibility for her case, although it did not have staff trained in working with persons with mental disabilities.

"Marina" was initially helped in a chose to return to her family, only to go back to the shelter after two were threatening her and her family. She suffered great anxiety as a result, with nightmares and flashcounselling and medication. After a long stay in the shelter and, unable to return home, she was sent to a third country where the security risks were less for help. After several months, Marina attempted to return to live with her family but was once again threatened by traffickers. She was again sent to the nearby third country for help, now found a job in a beauty salon

#### SUPPORTING THE RE/INTEGRATION OF SECONDARY BENEFICIARIES

"Rosa" came to the shelter when she was seven months pregnant and received prenatal medical care and parenting skills training. After giving birth to twins, a special section of the shelter was set aside for the family. Because she was not legally registered, shelter staff spent a lot of time working to register the twins' birth and accessing services for them and their mother. When the twins were one year old, they were diagnosed with a serious medical condition that required intensive treatment and follow-up - support facilitated by the assisting organisation.

"Milosh" was trafficked for forced labour. He migrated initially because he needed to care for his two children, both of whom have special needs. His nine-year-old son has severe myopia; his 14-year-old son is deaf-mute. Humanitarian assistance - food, clothes and hygienic supplies was provided in the immediate crisis stage for the family as a whole and transportation expenses were covered while the father looked for stable work in neighbouring towns. The children were provided with medical assistance to address their special needs - for example, special glasses for the youngest and audio prosthetic batteries for the older boy.

THE TVRP CONTRIBUTED SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE **OVERALL RE/INTEGRATION RESPONSE, WITH AN** AVERAGE OF 26% OF VICTIMS IDENTIFIED BY NATIONAL GOVERNMENTS ACROSS THE REGION.

to recover and move on from trafficking. For example, street begging stemming from trafficking is often over-

The fact that most trafficked men had no idea where to get assistance raised important questions about the visibility of re/integration services among "less typical" trafficked persons.

When the TVRP began, trafficked children and minors accounted for less than a quarter of all assisted cases. By 2011 that had risen to 49% - and to almost 70% by 2014. As a result, from 2012 to 2014 some TVRP funding was prioritised for NGOs with particular expertise in dealing with young victims.

18

The alarming rise also prompted initiatives in different settings – e.g. the development of indicators for identifying children at risk as well as the creation of a task force to coordinate help to trafficked children on the streets – and to extend that help to young trafficking victims who may not have been officially classified as such.

#### "OFFICIAL" TRAFFICKING VICTIMS

"Official" recognition depends on what is considered trafficking by authorities in different countries. For example, street begging stemming from trafficking is often overlooked, and many trafficking victims try to avoid identification because they lack trust in authorities or police. Others don't recognise themselves as victims, or are unaware that protection is available. Others are too ashamed of their situation to ask for support.

In practice, many are ignored because the designation "trafficking victim" does not legally apply to them.

But since 2007, all TVRP partners have helped not just those officially identified as victims but also a grey informal category of "potential trafficking victims" (trafficked persons not formally recognised by the state). This flexibility has been crucial to reach and help some of the most vulnerable groups and alert governments to this category. As a result. some countries now include recognition of potential trafficking victims in their laws and offer access to assistance, and some even include them in official statistics. All of this has had a significant influence on broader perceptions and understanding of the scale of the problem.



#### COMPREHENSIVE RE/INTEGRATION ASSISTANCE THROUGH THE TVRP

"Tefta" was trafficked for prostitution. When she was finally able to escape, she received a wide range of services from a TVRP partner organisation to meet her needs, including accommodation, medical treatment, help in processing documents, psychological assistance, and legal support and counselling throughout her trafficker's trial. Tefta is a recovering alcoholic and began drinking again during the trial to cope with the stress. The NGO supported her to enter an alcohol treatment centre and continue her education.

"Pjeter" was trafficked abroad for labour. He eventually managed to escape and returned home with no passport or money, and suffering from panic attacks, deep depression

and a serious medical condition. A assistance. He received help for two vears, including medical assistance. psychiatric treatment, legal aid, legal support during his trafficker's trial, police protection and help for family members. "I have to say all the best engaged: they called me very often and came to my house few times. during court process, fully informed, ... The most helpful assistance was providing a lawyer and preparation for court trial. Somebody from I the TVRP NGO] always went with me to assistance for me because that trial was very important for me too. All I wanted was for the trafficker to get the appropriate sentence so that he won't be able to do the same to other people".



#### HAPPY ENDS

"Majka" was trafficked as a child into an arranged marriage by her TVRP-supported programme. She time as she was a minor and had nowhere to live. There, she worked primary school and later a vocational training course in hairdressing. But she had nowhere to live father had been complicit in her care for her. Eventually the NGO who agreed to care for her and the NGO facilitated the transfer of guardianship to this aunt. Majka is learned the local language, is worengaged to a man she loves and is expecting a baby.

SOME KEY CONTRIBUTORS TO SUCCESSFUL RE/INTEGRATION: WHAT SERVICE PROVIDERS AND VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING SAY

"They are sometimes stuck, they don't have capacity to overcome the trauma and to start with normal life. It depends on the trauma. We have several cases where the victims had severe trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder and just couldn't move on. They couldn't move forward in their lives." (TVRP social worker)

"Once you are able to establish trust and a relationship with someone who has access to further systems and some capacity to just support you and then walk you through the system...you are not alone any more. Then slowly you start feeling like you have your self-esteem back and then believing in your own capacities". (TVRP social worker)

#### HIGH RATE OF RE/INTEGRATION

Of the 1,711 people who received integration services via the TVRP between 2007 and 2014, approximately 60% were successfully re-integrated, in line with the target set for this highly complex type of programme. In other cases, it remains too early to judge: many victims have only recently received assistance, the re/integration process often takes some time and also can involve many set-backs and failures and victims may, at different stages, be "successful" and "unsuccessful".

Re/integration success rates differ significantly between organisations and countries, from just 20-30% to 50-70%. The lower rates generally occur among organisations only recently involved with the TVRP or that work primarily with trafficked children living and working on the street - an especially vulnerable group with complex needs and whose re/integration progress is inevitably longer and less predictable. HAPPY ENDS

"Arta" was trafficked as a child by basic literacy and life skills. She was also not legally registered in her home country. One TVRP programme helped her to return to school and obtain her documents. After a few months, she decided to file criminal charges against her exploiters and the TVRP organisation supported her through the process, with the trafficker eventually convicted and jailed for ten vears. Two years after she entered the TVRP, Arta had finished primary school, having learned not only to read and write, but also to use a computer. When she turned 18. she started to work. struggling initially to keep a job but evenemployed and married. She also deal with the trauma of being sold by her mother into trafficking and the NGO supported her in meeting with her mother and the sub-



#### TVRP partners across the Balkan region reported "failure" in 11.3% of cases, for many reasons - from gaps in the provision of services to the extreme vulnerability of some categories of victims, such as street children from families with many problems, where re/integration is very difficult.

External factors can also hamper efforts to re/integrate victims, such as tough economic conditions which reduce the odds of victims becoming financially independent; to the scale, scope and quality of state service provision.

This is a key issue, given that the TVRP's re/integration effort is intended to link to the work of government bodies and other agencies as part of a comprehensive approach to help victims understand and claim their rights and entitlements.

The successes of re/integration services were not solely down to TVRP partner. They contributed substantially to the provision of comprehensive and high quality services, but as the programme continued, governments became increasingly involved in supporting re/integration efforts within their borders, especially in providing state services including medical care, vocational training and iob placements.

#### THE IMPORTANCE OF LONG-TERM, COMPREHENSIVE, HIGH QUALITY RE/INTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

"The NGO offered me a different way of assistance and it was longterm assistance. I can't imagine how my life will be without that. At that time, I didn't receive any informal help because I didn't know anybody. I was in isolation for a long time." (Woman trafficked for prostitution, without any family support)

"The case should not be just closed for those leaving the shelter. The victims should be given the opportunity to keep contact with the assistance staff. For a good word, for some advice. For victims to talk openly about their concerns." (Woman trafficked for prostitution)

Grants to TVRP partners did not fully fund all assistance programmes either, but offered consistent longterm, flexible finance, with money available for any relevant component of an organisation's re/integration work.

#### WHAT WOULD YOU HAVE DONE IF YOU HAD NOT BEEN ASSISTED?

"I do not know but I think my family would be in debt, they would have been horribly poor". (Boy trafficked for petty crime)

"I think that I would totally lose my mind. Maybe I would die from alcohol and maybe I would be doing commercial sexual work. I certainly would not be happy". (Woman trafficked for labour exploitation and prostitution)

And the continuity and predictability of TVRP funds actually prevented the closure of some re/integration initiatives when organisations ran into financial difficulties or donor support occasionally dried up.

Some categories of trafficking victims would probably not have been identified and helped at all without the involvement of TVRP partner organisations.

One example of this was trafficked men, who were targeted by the TVRP in its second phase. Another was children, trafficked for begging and street-selling, whose plight might also have gone unrecognised without the extra attention paid to funding organisations working with this group and training TVRP partners in working with trafficked children.

#### **MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE**

Many organisations working specifically with children living and working on the street - trafficked for labour or begging - argue that much more needs doing to ensure recognition and re/integration of such cases. Otherwise, the sustainability of re/ integration services cannot be guaranteed for all groups of trafficking victims once the TVRP ends.

#### TREATMENT BY SERVICES PROVIDERS DURING RE/INTEGRATION - POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE

"Staff from the orphanage had appropriate behaviour. They took care of our needs. Some of them, like one teacher and one tutor, always smile and were kind to us. I could tell them when I needed something and they would provide that... But the best behaviour was from the staff of [the NGO]. They are always kind and available for our needs - to follow us to the doctor, social worker and other institutions. They behaved like they are my family." (Girl trafficked for forced begging)

22

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24

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Apart from dramatically boosting the scope of re/integration services in the Balkans, the TVRP also played a critical role in providing guality care in a sensitive and ethical way, as many trafficking victims testified in interviews highlighting the sometimes insensitive and discriminatory attitude of some service providers, particularly in the state sector.

But while many reported cases of stigmatisation, insensitivity and discrimination, others reported positive experiences with state officials, such as medical staff. law-enforcement officers and social workers. This was especially true of individuals and institutions that TVRP partners worked closely with, suggesting that the TVRP model helped promote ethical principles and sensitivity to trafficked persons with state institutions.

More than one victim, when asked for their advice on how to improve help for others, said sensitive and kind treatment was essential.

One measure of the success or failure of re/integration services is the extent to which victims are re-trafficked - those who escape the traffickers, return home and are then re-trafficked. Sadly, approximately 17% of trafficking victims re/integrated, initially successfully, by TVRP

organisations, have since been re-trafficked.

The risk is clearly highest for victims returning to the same difficult situation that led to their being trafficked in the first place, such as children living on the street, who are especially prone to multiple trafficking experiences at different stages of their lives.

#### **FAMILIES KEY TO SUCCESS**

The family environment for a returning trafficking victim is obviously central to the re/integration process. Families who blame unreachable social and economic needs partly on a returning victim, or who refuse to welcome the victim home, were recognised by TVRP partners as a serious problem from the start. The issue highlighted the importance of supporting families as part of a comprehensive effort to meet victims' re/ integration needs, and of dealing with often-complicated familv dvnamics.

This was far from common when the TVRP began in 2007, at a time when many organisations struggled to cover the costs of helping family members in addition to case management and family mediation.

And while there is now greater attention paid to supporting victims' family members, some donors and governments are reluctant to provide the necessary funds for these "secondary beneficiaries".

#### ASSISTING THE FAMILY AS PART **OF RE/INTEGRATION**

prostitution and assisted within a creating a conducive environment for her long-term re/integration : "I remember we had a girl in the unemployed, so what to do? We need to be supportive, to find a iob for her mother".





# SE Jac BUILDING NGOS' ABILITY TO PROVIDE RE/INTEGRATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT

#### **HIGH-QUALITY SERVICE**

A needs assessment commissioned by KBF in 2006 revealed a need to boost professional knowledge within NGOs to help them provide high quality re/integration services in the Balkan region.

On-going mentoring and peer-topeer learning during the TVRP helped maximise and enhance expertise, share best practice between partners and develop the necessary skill to tackle the myriad problems faced in re/integration work.

While technical assistance was offered, many organisations were keen to benefit from other forms of technical support. Many feel they would have benefitted from broader technical backing, both in terms of fundraising and organisational development.

#### **PROMOTE UNDERSTANDING**

A key TVRP component was the publication of Issue Papers (see p49) to share experiences from day to day re/integration work as a means of promoting understanding and capacity among partners and more widely in the re/integration sector. The papers tracked the challenges faced by partners and shared ways of tackling them. The TVRP partners were fully involved in analysing and drafting papers, incorporating their own experiences and observations. The papers went to governments and donors as part of promotion and fundraising efforts, and were widely distributed among policy-makers, to give comprehensive coverage of the long-term re/integration effort - its failures and problems as well as the successes.

A preliminary strategy for monitoring TVRP partners' re/integration work was developed in 2009, with the development and testing of two unique matrices focused on monitoring Re/integration success and services. This included the indicators needed to measure results over the three phases of re/integration. The matrices were part of an overall guidance manual on monitoring and training in its used was also provided. The monitoring system is already reaping rewards and is being used in all TVRP programmes.

There were also technical seminars for intensive training on issues identified by TVRP partners as being particularly important. Governments were included in the technical seminars, and the KBF hosted annual meetings with all TVRP partners to share experiences, challenges and good practice.

AUDOUIN FOUNDATION

N G B BUILDING NGOS' ABILITY TO PROVIDE RE/INTEGRATION SERVICES AND SUPPORT

#### **ETHICAL RE/INTEGRATION**

Ethical issues were consistently raised as pressing by partners as the TVRP developed. They voiced frustration at the lack of attention paid to ethical issues in the re/integration area and the need for carefully stipulated ethical principles to ensure that re/integration work meets the highest human rights standards and offers the highest quality of care. The result was the collaborative development of ethical principles within the framework of the TVRP, both for monitoring work and also for re/integration programming overall.

LIFE BEYOND TRAFFICKING THE RE/INTEGRATION OF TRAFFICKED PERSONS IN THE BALKANS 2007-2014 TVRP partners assert that their work with governments in recent years has, in many cases, boosted the government's ability to support re/integration. This is backed by evidence from government partners themselves, who also highlight continuing cooperation with TVRP partners, with the focus always on the interests and needs of trafficking victims. Monitoring and evaluation helped structure the programme and develop a common understanding of re/integration.

Recommendations for improvements include sharing experience and information more widely so that more organisations can benefit from it. Partners highlighted problems caused by the high turnover of staff in many government departments, while many trafficking victims complained that social workers often appeared more concerned about bureaucracy than about the person needing support.

While the TVRP contributed to improvements in government-backed re/integration services, efforts made by governments themselves in some countries to enhance the re/integration response should not be overlooked.

#### TRAFFICKED PERSONS ASSISTED BY SKILLED AND SENSITIVE STAFF

"They supported me a lot, emotionally. They made me feel very good. I pulled myself together, came in control of myself. I found a job, a house... I could speak freely with all the workers. They supported me, advised me. They told me that things would be solved step-by-step... I would give them 10 [the highest school score] in everything! All the assistance they gave me, but especially with the emotional support I have received from them. They gave me peace, emotional peace". (Woman at risk of trafficking for sexual exploitation)

CAREFULLY STIPULATED ETHICAL PRINCIPLES ARE NEEDED TO ENSURE THAT RE/INTEGRATION WORK MEETS THE HIGHEST HUMAN RIGHTS STANDARDS AND OFFERS THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF CARE.



#### COMMITTING TO RE/INTEGRATION

Before the TVRP was launched, studies pointed to a lack of involvement by national governments to helping trafficking victims to re/integrate. State departments treated the issue as something being tackled by international organisations, either directly or by providing grants to NGOs. Government focus was typically shortterm rather than being geared towards the longer-term re/integration of victims returning to their families and communities in the Balkans.

There was a recognised need for increased government investment as well as new national policies to help re-integrate trafficking victims, including minimum standards of care and standard operating procedures. It was also felt that organisations and institutions should work within a comprehensive national referral framework, with state authorities and NGOs pooling their efforts.

The TVRP took note, and made a priority of increased cooperation and partnership with governments promoting re/integration, although all TVRP-funded NGOs were cooperating with governments even before the programme began. A well-functioning National Referral Mechanism (NRM) was seen as a crucial part of a re/integration programme and NRMs now exist in all the countries where the TVRP operated. But again some countries had already established an NRM by the time the TVRP began in 2007, to increase effective identification, referral and assistance of trafficking victims, and to offer access to a range of services, tailored to their needs.

#### **GUIDELINES AND FEEDBACK**

At the start in 2007, there were few guidelines and no minimum standards of care and standard operating procedures (SOPs) for re/integration work. But TVRP partners have been working with governments and NGOs on developing a regulatory framework for assistance and re/ integration and have also helped draft legislation reinforcing assistance and re/integration. Where needed, they have set up partnerships at various levels of government, such as social work centres, employment centres and hospitals.

Before the TVRP was launched, feedback from beneficiaries was not routinely sought by all partners. But this has been an important principle of the programme from the outset, with the needs of victims at the centre of **O4** ENCOURAGING COOPERATION AND SYNERGIES WITH GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISMS

discussions about all aspects of re/ integration. Apart from anything else, such hands-on cooperation with the recovering victims contributes to their empowerment and provides critical information about how programmes can be improved to better support victims.

And yet the risk remains of only token involvement of the beneficiaries, and interviews with trafficking victims for this report have highlighted the ongoing need for a more victim-centred and sensitive approach within institutions.

# GROWING ACCESS TO STATE SUPPORT

Access to government services such as medical care, training and job placements has been an area of focus from the launch of the TVRP. Originally partner organisations could not rely on state-provided services and had to offer some services privately meaning keeping professionals permanently on staff or hiring private doctors instead of being able to access state healthcare.

Since then, access to government services has grown significantly and TVRP partners increasingly rely on various state services, from employment agencies, micro-credit programmes, and education programmes, to social centres, medical care and legal aid.

But again, some barriers to statefunded services remain, with significant effects on the lives of trafficking victims, who find themselves up against oppressive bureaucratic procedures, uncooperative officials, and discrimination: heavy bureaucracy is difficult to navigate and understand and is especially intimidating and confusing for the poorly-educated or those who come from socially marginalised groups.

One important characteristic of capacity-building and mentoring of TVRP partners was to tailor it to each NGO's needs and involved operational workers as well as directors and senior staff. This, when replicated through their own work with government partners, gave the broadest possible basis for success. But some government officials felt that more could have been done to foster the relationship between NGOs and governments and offer more training opportunities.

TVRP organisations are now recognised as re/integration experts in their own countries, within civil society and governments. This gives them credibility with government partners, further improving trafficking victims' access to re/integration support. That has led in turn to more cases being referred and more state services being provided to meet some of the victims' assistance needs, as well as making governments more aware that NGOs working on re/integration cannot succeed without their support.

Government stakeholders largely, but not exclusively, credit TVRP partners with initiating and maintaining contacts and cooperation, fostering the mutual respect that is seen by the NGOs as critical to their work and to bring about change.

Enhanced cooperation has improved the functioning of the referrals system and increased the numbers of cases referred by state agencies to TVRP partners. That in turn promotes further cooperation, creating a virtuous circle.

The long-term nature of the TVRP was key in helping NGOs build trust with government partners over time, fostering cooperation and coordination. What is most important is the impact this has had on the lives of trafficked victims.



#### BARRIERS FACED BY TRAFFICKED PERSONS IN ACCESSING STATE SERVICES

"The services that [the TVRP partner organisation] provided for me, I think if I had to go alone I would wait longer because I didn't know where to go, what to ask, which doctor I needed. All people from [the TVRP partner organisation] were professional, protective, available, positive and smiling. I didn't like the behaviour of the social worker. She wasn't dedicated and she spoke to me in a very arrogant way. She looked only in papers, not in real life. Most helpful was that [the TVRP partner organisation] never left me alone... I was concerned about how I will cope in this big city. But in the beginning every time when I went out somebody [from the TVRP partner organisation] would come with me while I got to know [the city]. (Woman trafficked for prostitution) **U4** ENCOURAGING COOPERATION AND SYNERGIES WITH GOVERNMENT SERVICES AND NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISMS

#### THE IMPACT OF COOPERATION AND REFERRALS IN THE LIVES OF TRAFFICKED PERSONS

One woman, trafficked for prostitution, explained how the NGO, through cooperation with and referral to the municipal office in her home area, was able to ensure access to services and support toward her re/integration: "[The NGO] arranged that I got social housing from the commune, the municipality. The commune provided social housing where I could live with my children and I did not have to pay for it. That was for six months".

LIFE BEYOND TRAFFICKING THE RE/INTEGRATION OF TRAFFICKED PERSONS IN THE BALKANS 2007-2014 Progress towards greater cooperation and coordination has not always been smooth, but, even though barriers remain, overall cooperation and coordination between NGOs and governments in the region has significantly improved.

#### **DEFINING RE/INTEGRATION**

Overall, the TVRP has played a central role in designing and framing re/ integration programmes and policies in the Balkan region. Great strides have been made in the discussion about what re/integration means and how it can best be achieved, as well as in developing, testing and promoting materials aimed at establishing an operational framework.

These have included a definition of re/integration (and integration) based on the experiences of service providers and victims; a realistic timeframe for achieving it (up to 36 months); a set of outcomes that cumulatively constitute successful re/integration; a set of services that may be required as part of a comprehensive re/integration assistance package; and analysis of the different challenges involved in the re/ integration process, at an individual, family and community level.

As a result, re/integration is now clearly defined and understood, and there is widespread recognition in the region that re/integration is a long-term and complex process, fraught with the risk of failures and set-backs, and requiring great investment and perseverance.

TVRP partners have emphasised the critical importance of re/integration efforts as well as the need for state funding and services to ensure sustainable re/integration support. This has been done through day to day contact with state officials; joint management of re/integration cases; technical seminars and training for government partners; and the sharing and promoting TVRP materials.

The TVRP has also supported efforts to raise awareness of re/integration at a national, regional, EU and international level.

The development of ethical principles was also an important part of the TVRP's work, and there are many examples of these principles being applied to steer the work of TVRP partners and their relations with governments and NGOs, with positive results for trafficking victims assisted by the TVRP.



# THE IMPACT ON VICTIMS WHEN ETHICAL PRINCIPLES ARE ENSURED

One young woman, who was trafficked as a child on the street, was in and out of orphanages throughout her childhood. She was eventually assisted by a TVRP organisation after being identified by an outreach worker. This girl described how during her first encounter with the outreach worker she was very suspicious and did not trust what she was offered: "She told me that I could get food and clothes there and I could find my peers and friends there. I didn't believe her. I was scared that she would hurt me too". But being treated sensitively and respectfully by the outreach worker led her to change her mind: "She was persistent, nice and friendly and I accepted to go to [the NGO].

## REACHING A WIDE RANGE OF VICTIMS; ASSISTING THE UNASSISTED

"Dana" was trafficked at age six for forced begging. Her early years were very difficult and exploitative: "I had to stay on the crossroads the whole day. Father would beat me and my sister". After several years, the police found Dana on the streets and took her to an orphanage, where she staved for six years. As a teenager she ran away and lived on the streets. She had a child, but was abandoned by the child's father. Dana refused to live in the state-run orphanage or give up her child, and could not access state services because she lacked the requisite documents. Through an outreach worker, she learned about the services available through one TVRP partner. which worked with the Centre for Social Work to help Dana keep custody of her baby and to obtain the necessary documents for herself and her child. Through the NGO, she also received psychological counselling and attended various workshops.



#### **AFTER THE TVRP?**

The sustainability of long-term re/ integration assistance was not seen as a priority before the TVRP was launched, despite diminishing donor funds for even basic anti-trafficking assistance efforts in the Balkans, let alone re/integration programmes.

The TVRP changed this, focusing on how to foster sustainability, including pushing for government funding for re/integration services; leveraging private-sector contributions; and establishing social enterprises to fund re/integration services. These strategies have had mixed results, and funding for re/integration continues to be a challenge directly threatening the sustainability of re/ integration services in the Balkan region.

The TVRP cannot fully fund re/integration programmes and partners must find other donors, for example by leveraging funding from the state, private businesses, local non-profit organisations and through social enterprises.

The problem is that funding from international donors has progressively decreased, with five out of 11 TVRP partners not receiving any bilateral funds, EU funds are notoriously difficult to access and there is

no specific funding for re/integration work. As a result, with the end of the TVRP, some organisations are facing emergency situations as they have not yet been able to leverage any funds for their re/integration programme.

#### **GROWING SUPPORT**

It has been a financial roller-coaster: when the TVRP started, there was little government support for re/integration services or programmes, partly because of budget deficits in social services, health and education and also because of a perception that trafficking victims were foreign nationals. NGOs taking on re/integration work thus had little government backing. But by 2014, the success of many TVRP NGOs had triggered a change of heart, with government contributions beginning to flow.

However, the amounts were small, compared with the cost of re/integration services and programmes. And government support has hardly been stable: state funding has fluctuated with budget constraints as well as changes in government and political priorities. This uncertainty has harmed the continuity and long-term planning essential for re/integration work. **U5** PROMOTING RE/INTEGRATION PROGRAMMES TO CONTINUE BEYOND THE SCOPE OF THE KBF AND GIZ GRANT PERIOD

When the TVRP began, partnerships with state agencies such as job centres and hospitals were limited, and trafficking victims faced bureaucratic problems in accessing even the most basic state services. Now governments increasingly offer re/integration support services, such as medical care, counselling and legal aid, although some significant gaps remain and some countries have made little progress.

Complicating the situation still further is the fact that state services are often only available to officially recognised trafficking victims, and many go unrecognised as "trafficking victims" by the state, and are thus left without access to state services for trafficked persons.

38

And as to the role of the private sector, before the TVRP was launched, only a few organisations approached private businesses for donations and in-kind contributions, and there was very limited interest from many businesses in supporting re/integration work.

Since then, partners have sought to secure private-sector donations as part of their sustainability strategy. These most commonly comprise in-kind contributions (e.g. free dental services for beneficiaries, reduced fees for professional training courses, donations from or discounts at local stores on clothes, shoes, food, hygiene supplies, building supplies for renovating shelters, etc.)

TVRP organisations also faced complicated administrative procedures and the lack of tax breaks for business donations. Staff costs have also been a problem, constituting a high percentage of re/integration budgets, thanks to labour intensive case management, which underpins successful re/integration. Some partners also struggle to leverage funds for staff salaries, with many private donors preferring to fund 'tangible' contributions.

Social enterprises have been progressively explored within the TVRP as a means of at least partial funding. Some NGOs have established small businesses with varying degrees of success. Challenges included high taxes, no legal framework for operations; a lack of the business skills needed to run firms, a lack of access to start- up capital; discrimination and a risk of stigmatisation if advertised as assisting trafficking victims.

# BUSINESS BOOST FOR RE/INTEGRATION

The answer was the Regional Social Business Fund, set up in 2013 to offer finance and technical assistance to NGOs chosen to launch a social business



In effect, the TVRP went commercial, selecting the most promising NGO candidates and helping them to establish new social businesses or scale up existing ones as a means of raising more funds to support continuing re/integration programmes. KBF was insistent on the move, to provide employment and give sustainability and meaning to re/integration.

Success stories include a bagel shop in Tirana which has now been financially self-supporting for two years. It is one of five grant-supported TVRP-related business success stories, including an adult supervised children's play centre, a bakery, and an agriculture business.

Other advances include the licensing by some governments of social workers and other service providers as part of efforts to improve the social protection sector. This is an important step towards sustainable re/integration services, but licensing alone will not ensure sustainability, as it will not automatically translate into funds.

#### **NO CERTAINTY**

All in all, over the course of the TVRP, NGOs have greatly increased their ability to find funding. But it remains a worry as private support

cannot be guaranteed in the long term, and some government departments are clearly more committed to re/integration work than others.

More can and should be done by the state to ensure sustainability of re/ integration support – and this responsibility rests not only with state social services, but also with other government departments.

Despite the setbacks and ongoing struggle for support, a comparison of the situation in 2006 and 2015 tells a positive tale.

In 2006, assistance was short-term, limited in scope, largely funded by international donors and with few services offered to trafficking victims by the state. There was no designated funding for re/integration efforts from either donors or governments, and limited understanding of the nature and complexity of the issue.

Now re/integration programmes are established and have supported more than 1700 trafficking victims and their families, with over 1000 trafficking victims successfully re-integrated and many more currently in the process of re/integration.



THE QUESTION IS: WHAT HAPPENS NEXT? WILL OTHERS RISE TO THE CHALLENGE AND KEEP THIS CRUCIAL WORK GOING? THE TVRP HAS PAVED THE WAY FOR INNOVATIVE PRACTICES FOR THOSE READY TO FOLLOW - HERE ARE SEVEN OF THEM:

A careful, systematic approach: The TVRP was developed and implemented carefully, thoughtfully and systematically, based on an independent assessment of the region's needs. It continued to evolve and adapt based on emerging needs and analysis, and recognition that re/integration had to be a long-term commitment.

**More than grants**: The TVRP's main component was grants to ensure that partners could offer on-going high quality re/integration services to trafficking victims. But the programme also offered partners other opportunities to enhance their work and skills – through on-going technical assistance and the chance to connect and learn from each other.

**Needs-driven**: The programme was designed based on the needs of re/ integration organisations, rather than an externally derived model being

imposed upon organisations. The further development of the programme was based on on-going conversations of needs, with a number of NGOs asserting that the TVRP approach was less of a donor/ grantee relationship and more one of "partnership".

Long-term, providing predictability over time: All partners highlighted the multi-year nature of the TVRP as essential to plan and organise sustainable re/integration work with their beneficiaries. Predictability of funds meant being able to offer longer services to beneficiaries and formulate a long term re/integration plan. In some cases TVRP funds were essential to bridge gaps between other grants as well as guaranteeing uninterrupted re/integration services during funding crises. Reasonable procedures and reporting requirements: Reasonable reporting and management requirements were highlighted as a helpful component of the TVRP. not least because of the labour intensive work involved in re/integration. TVRP partners submitted interim and final reports for each grant. Both narrative and financial reports followed a simple format and the focus of reporting was to document the nature and scope of re/integration assistance as well as to reflect on challenges faced during the programme and in the country more generally. The reports are also a tool for identifying the challenges victims face to inform technical seminars and partners meetings. Also appreciated was the ease and informality of communication with the donor.

Flexibility: TVRP grants could be used for any aspect of re/integration work - for services, staff, office costs, etc. Budget lines could also be reallocated in response to emerging

issues and needs. Each organisation could access funds most relevant for their work. Such flexibility is key in an area where funding is unpredictable, the number of potential victims fluctuates, and different services may be needed.

Cooperation between donors: When GIZ began to work on human trafficking in the region, the large budget and overlapping mandate of the two donors risked creating (or further exacerbating) competition between NGOs and lead to duplicative (and/or an oversupply) of re/ integration services. There was also a risk that a large influx of funds would set back TVRP efforts to ensure sustainability. Recognising these risks in spite of differences in spite of differences between organisations and programmes increased the financial and geographical scope of the TVRP and increased government involvement in the TVRP.

FLEXIBILITY IS KEY IN AN **AREA WHERE FUNDING** IS UNPREDICTABLE, THE NUMBER OF **POTENTIAL VICTIMS FLUCTUATES, AND DIFFERENT SERVICES** MAY BE NEEDED.





AND, FOR THOSE WAITING IN THE WINGS TO TAKE UP THE RE/INTEGRATION CHALLENGE, HERE ARE EIGHT POINTERS FOR BUILDING ON THE UNDOUBTED SUCCESSES SO FAR:

More attention to identification: Links between re/integration and victim identification need greater attention in moving forward, particularly amongst less identifiable trafficking victims.

#### Greater understanding of failed re/ integration and re-trafficking

In spite of significant successes, some trafficking victims are not successfully reintegrated and are even re-trafficked. More needs to be done to ensure that individuals are able to recover and move on from trafficking. This necessarily requires greater understanding of what leads to failed re/integration and, in some cases, even re-trafficking.

Higher levels of funding for re/integration work: For some TVRP organisations the modest funding was, at times, inadequate to meet the full range of the re/integration needs of trafficking victims. Despite clear successes in developing re/integration skills and programmes, some organisations are now facing funding crises which threaten future work.

**Longer timeframe**: Some said an even longer timeframe for the programme would have been better, for example to aid organisations in transitioning from offering direct assistance to victims to long-term re/ integration programme. More time would have been especially helpful for organisations working with street-involved children, to build up their re/integration response for this target group as well as foster institutional capacity and commitment with government partners.

More advocacy with governments: TVRP partners invested much time and energy in urging re/integration support and state-run services, and some felt more effort was needed by donors to influence governments to take responsibility. However, advocacy and lobbying is not a panacea and had, in some cases, yielded limited success.

**More tailored exit strategies**: In 2011 partners were informed that this was to be the last round of grants and that the TVRP would end in 2014. The Regional Social Business Fund was intended to smooth the TVRP's end in 2014, but not all NGOs received funds for a social enterprise and social enterprises was not an appropriate model for all partners' work or current situation. More might have been done smooth the closing of the TVRP, although this cannot be the sole responsibility of the donors.

Long term opportunities for re/integration funds: In spite of efforts to foster sustainable programmes, this objective remains elusive. Organisations, having built up their skills and programmes over the past several years, are now being faced with serious funding crises because they have been unable to leverage funds for their re/integration work. This gap in funds is having a direct and immediate effect in the lives of trafficked persons in need of re/integration support. What can be done to support sustainability of re/integration services merits careful thought in terms of donors and organisations moving forward with efforts to foster sustainable re/integration services.

**Strengthen network of NGOs**: Time will tell to what extent partner organisations will maintain their network beyond the TVRP. Informal partnerships and ad hoc communication have developed outside more formal TVRP-facilitated meetings and events, but what this network might focus on or how it might be maintained and fostered remain open questions.

LINKS BETWEEN RE/ INTEGRATION AND VICTIM IDENTIFICATION NEED GREATER ATTENTION IN MOVING FORWARD, PARTICULARLY AMONGST LESS IDENTIFIABLE TRAFFICKING VICTIMS.



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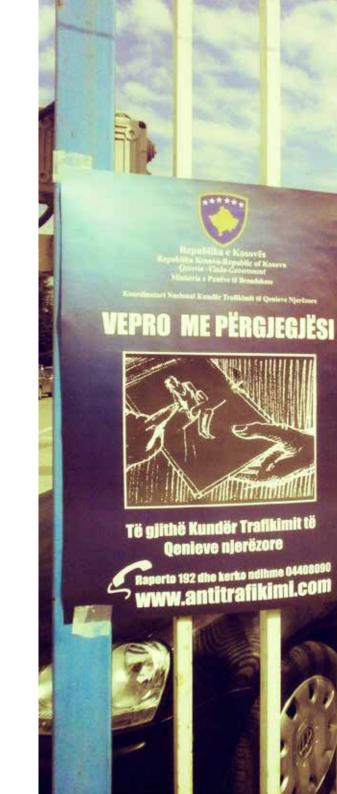
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