

Access to Rights for Children in Contexts of Migration

By 2028, children and youth in vulnerable situations due to migration recover rights that have been denied to them through a coherent transnational program of interlinked local support structures. Children and youth in vulnerable situations due to migration have the opportunity to shape the child-centered program according to their rights and needs and to create testimony and voice their demands locally, nationally, and transnationally.

1. Rationale behind this goal

tdh and the partners have been working on this topic, in fact, "psychosocial and educational care for forcibly displaced children" was one of the objectives of the 2018/2023 period.

This new goal shall create a leap in our work by creating a coherent program approach that strengthens child-centered local support structures on one hand, and cooperation and exchange between different local support structures on the other hand. The program is focused on strengthening and supporting migrating children and youth, as well as their families, in vulnerable situations, whose rights have been denied, especially children and youth forced to migrate due to armed conflict, climate crisis, political oppression, gender identity or sexual orientation, for example, as well as stateless children and youth.

The quality of local support structures shall be enhanced, whereby quality is principally understood as improving child-centered approaches (realizing the right to participation), as well as the compliance of support services with different professional standards (e.g. in MHPSS, Education, Legal Support, Child protection) in order to *effectively* grant access to fundamental rights in these areas (e.g. health, identity, protection from violence, right to play).

Solidary local support structures consist in all the local actors and their interactions that (should) support children and youth in vulnerable situations due migration in a community to realize their rights, e.g., activists, volunteers, nonprofit organizations, tdh partner organizations, state agencies, and of course the children and youth and their organizations themselves. Although tdh usually supports a specific actor (mostly partner organizations of the civil society, measures shall be focused at improving the quality of the whole structure (system oriented). By communities we refer to all communities: of origin, on the trajectory and especially receiving communities.

With the term of migrating children and youth, we refer to those whose rights have been violated or are at risk of having their rights violated. We also include explicitly displaced children and youth.

Impact Hypothesis:

IF we promote professional, and inclusive local support structures, for and with self-organizations of migrant children and youth that consider the triple nexus (peace, solidarity, humanitarian assistance), and strengthen networking between these different local support structures on a local, national and regional level

THEN we will achieve quality results of interlinked child-centered local structures, which enable children and youth and solidary supporters to enter a dialogue and voice the real needs of children and youth in situations of migration exposed to rights violations at different levels (local, national, regional, international)

BECAUSE the work is oriented at the real needs (relevant) as articulated and brought forward by migrant children and youth themselves and well-prepared professionals, who coordinate their measures through local networks without hierarchy and exchange on a national and transnational level.

2. Key reasons for supporting and funding access to rights for children and youth in contexts of migration

Although migration is a right, on many occasions it can only be carried out under conditions of coercion, or with violation of rights (or at risk of suffering it). The causes of migration under these conditions are multiple: from armed or environmental conflicts to extreme poverty, injustice or lack of opportunities, almost all of them linked to a dominant development model that reproduces inequalities throughout the world.

According to OHCHR about 3,6% of the world's population is currently living outside their country of origin, many of them involuntarily and/or exposed to rights violations. The number is even higher if we count internally displaced persons. Often fundamental rights are denied to migrating children and youth, especially if they have migrated or have been displaced forcibly and/or are stateless.

Freedom of movement is a human right, and migrants must be able to enjoy all human rights, before, during and once they arrive at their destination as well as when they return. Migration must be exercised free of racism, xenophobia. It is the role and responsibility of states to guarantee these human rights. However, children and youth in these situations are exposed to a multiple number of risks, which can lead to their death or permanent impairment of their mental and physical wellbeing and failure to access their most basic human rights. Most of these children and youth are deprived of almost all their children's rights. While more and more migrating children and youth are in direct need of a wide range of qualified support, at the same time the coordination and support structures often do not take sufficient account of the concrete needs of children and youth. The measures are then in the best case only limited effective. In the worst case, they mean an additional burden or harm. The demand for support sensitive to children's rights has increased significantly in recent years. Under the heading of localization, state and civil society organizations recently tried to strengthen and qualify the role of local actors in coordination, prevention work, provision of services and child protection. However, a practical translation into the reality of support measures is far from being achieved. Especially in the field of humanitarian aid, needs are seldom identified together with

affected children and youth. Children and youth are hardly recognized and promoted as possible active partners in the support structures themselves. Therefore, tdh and partners will form an interlinked child-centered program, which promotes on all levels the participation and self-organization of children and youth in vulnerable situations due to migration.

3. Approaches and frameworks that support access to rights for children and youth in contexts of migration

For many decades, tdh has promoted many excellent local projects to focus on the needs of children and young people (self-organization of adopted children in Germany, umbrella organization for unaccompanied minor refugees in Germany, organization of children and youth in exploitative child labor etc.). However, the focus was often on singular projects and not on structures and local systems.

The creation of a child-centered program approach towards local quality structures for participation, protection, and provision for and with children and youth in situations of migration exposed to rights violations developed from decades of experiences in this field, will be used as a model and contribution to put the interests and capacities of children and youth in the focus of the coordination and support structures. The program will translate the demands and ideas of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (GCM). It answers the demands towards the Localizing of the Global Compact. It will take up the results of the so-called Grand Bargain of the World Humanitarian Summit 2016, to support and invest in local, national and regional leadership, capacity strengthening and response systems [...]” and to “[c]ommit to empower national and local humanitarian action by increasing the share of financing accessible to local and national humanitarian actors and supporting the enhancement of their national delivery system, capacities and preparedness planning”¹ and will be based on the Geneva Convention on Refugees and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The humanitarian sector is strongly dominated by the UN and international NGOs which spend large amounts of money on humanitarian assistance with no links to any sustainable development, recovery, livelihoods, durable solutions and/or peace building, which is both unsustainable and contrary to the localization agenda. We strongly support the localization agenda.

4. Outcomes to be achieved by supporting and funding access to rights for children and youth in contexts of migration

Within the coming five years, tdh and partners will establish a coherent transnational program of interlinked solidary local support structures to grant children and youth in situations of migration access to their rights by the provision of truly child-centered services (e. g. MHPSS, Education, Child Protection, Legal advice) and forwarding the

¹ Krähling, Karoline (2017): Lokalisierung von Humanitärer Hilfe: wie lokale Akteure gestärkt werden können, <http://blog.venro.org/lokalisierung-von-humanitaerer-hilfe-wie-lokale-akteure-gestaerkt-werden-koennen/>

participation of concerned children not only in the program, but in society. Forwarding participation does not only mean to empower migrating children and youth but also to tackle xenophobia and racism in receiving communities as fundamental barriers to their right to participation. Though it is a transnational program, it will focus on building strong local structures. tdh's role in this is not only to further strengthen the local structures, but also to interlink them for mutual learning and lobbying by voicing the needs and rights of children and youth.

On the micro-level, professionals in the areas of MHPSS, legal support, education and child protection are capacitated to follow respective professional standards in each field and a child-centered approach. The professionals cooperate with children and youth in situations of migration, who themselves strengthen their participation. Wherever possible, self-organization of children and youth is promoted and exchange with the receiving community sought to try to diminish stereotypes, discrimination and xenophobia. Likewise, the building and strengthening of children and youth protection and alert systems at community level and on the migration trajectory are supported.

On the meso-level, the decision-taking power of local actors (especially in humanitarian aid) with the local networks is increased and interlinkages and cooperation between local actors improved, guaranteeing synergies for children and youth. Experiences from the different local networks are exchanged and testimony of children and youth from the networks are given voice in politics and society. One method to be used could be the establishment of multi-actor agreements to promote peaceful coexistence and integration as well as protection from violence, sexual exploitation and discrimination.

On the macro-level, the example of the program of tdh and partners serve to create autonomous local solidary support structures for and with self-organization of children and youth in vulnerable situations due to migration. The cooperation and networking between the different local support structures and self-organized children and youth is used to voice their needs in society. The experiences of tdh and partners are taken up by others, forwarding transformation in society.

The goal interlinks with all the other goals:

Education and Empowerment: Adaptive education models respecting the needs of children and youth in vulnerable situations due to migration help to create real life perspectives, offering livelihood opportunities and preventing violence and exploitation. In this context, adaptive education also includes peace education and the recognition of foreign qualifications and education.

Taking Action against Gender-Based Violence and Discrimination: Fostering feminist movements also has a special role when it comes to support the self-organization of children and youth in vulnerable situations due to migration. Concepts such as positive masculinity and gender-sensitivity should also be at the core of professional standards. Furthermore, a conflict-sensitive approach in projects must always consider gender-sensitivity.

Young Environmental Citizens: The devastating effects of climate change increasingly cause migration of the most vulnerable. Therefore, climate justice and lobbying for the

Right to a Healthy and Sustainable Environment are part of prevention of compulsory migration.

5. Lasting effects envisioned by access to rights for children and youth in contexts of migration

On the long run, this goal can contribute to establishing a power shift in the mechanisms of international solidarity by putting those concerned into the center of attention and decision-making. This ultimately can contribute to helping children and youth in vulnerable situations due to migration to live a life without structural violence.

6. Five criteria for supporting and funding access to rights for children and youth in contexts of migration

The following supporting and funding principles define tdh's approach to accompanying children, youth and partner organizations and civil society movements worldwide in their struggles and fight for local solidary support structures for and with children and youth in vulnerable situations due to migration. Through this kind of engagement, tdh will support particularly grassroot and frontline activities, which will induce sustainable social changes in the long term.

Definition of target groups

We address all children and youth whose rights have been systematically denied and that encounter themselves in a vulnerable situation because they have migrated (including returnees), are migrating or are considering migrating.

Criteria

- **Child-Centeredness:** Include the highest amount of inclusion of children and youth possible (at least consultation, at best self-organization).
- **Professionalization:** Respective professional standards and methods (e.g., MHPSS, legal work, education (incl. peace education), documentation, child protection, management of humanitarian services) of work are demonstrated, or a training plan to meet those standards and methods is provided.
- **Coherence/Triple Nexus:** Coherence and transition between humanitarian assistance, long term solidarity work and peace building is considered in the project (Triple Nexus).
- **Giving Voice and Visibility:** As a logical consequence of child-centered structures, all projects are fit to contribute to a lobby work, which provides qualified testimonies of migrating children and youth whose rights have been denied, to draw attention to their situation, needs and rights.
- **Conflict Sensitivity:** Specific conflict analysis of interventions available.