# A shared vision for systemic child protection: Advocating, developing, evidencing, and partnering to build a child protection system

## Lessons learned from Albania. Terre des hommes Mission in Albania Institutional Learning Process

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Improving care experiences

## Contents

# Glossary

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|---|---|
| Amaro-Drom | The Union of Albanian Roma.<br>An Albanian NGO focusing on the development and integration of Roma minority in Albania. |
| AVR | Assisted Voluntary Return |
| ARSIS | Association for the Social Support of Youth.<br>This Greek NGO first worked with Tdh in Thessaloniki, it is now also registered as an NGO in Albania. http://arsis.gr/ |
| BKTF | Bashkë për Kujdesin Tërësor të Fëmijëve - All Together Against Child Trafficking.<br>This national coalition of Albanian and international organisations first came together in 2002. By 2014 membership extended to 28 national and international organisations in Albania and changed its name to reflect extended focus on child protection (BKTF- United for Child Care and Protection).<br>http://www.bktf-coalition.org/ |
| CBO | Community Based Organisation |
| CPSN | Child Protection Safety Net project |
| CPU | Child Protection Unit |
| CPW | Child Protection Worker |
| CRU | Child Rights Unit |
| ERACT | Emergency Response Against Child Trafficking bilateral project |
| FBSh | Femijët e Botës Shqiperi        Children of the World and of Albania. |
| INGO | International Non-Governmental Organisation |
| IOM | International Organisation for Migration |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organisation |
| Norad | Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation |
| NPF | Ndhimë për Fëmijët - Help for Children.<br>This Albanian NGO was founded in 1998 with Tdh's assistance.<br>http://www.npf.al/index.php?lang=en |
| PRAEVE | Prevention, Reintegration & Assistance for Child Victims of Exile (Project) |
| Rromani Baxt | a Roma NGO located in Tirana, Albania's capital city.<br>http://www.rromanibaxtalbania.org/ |
| SIDA | Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency |
| Tdh | Terre des homes<br>This Swiss INGO first started operating in Albania in 1993. There was a short suspension of activity in the 1990s, but the delegation was re-established in 1999.<br>http://www.tdh.ch/en/countries/albania |
| TACT | Transnational Action against Child Trafficking project |
| UNICEF | United Nations Children's Fund |
| USAID | US Agency for International Development |

# Acknowledgements

# 1    Executive summary

## Section 1 – Background – working towards a shared vision for child protection in Albania

This document reports on an Institutional Learning Process that has critically analysed the impact and effectiveness of Terre des hommes' (Tdh) engagement in Albania over the last 14 years. It also looks at the role Tdh has played in the emergence of a State Child Protection System (CPS) in the country. The long-term focus for Tdh has been on protecting children, and successive teams have sought to ground their work in the experiences of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Working closely with front-line professionals involved in providing care and protection to these children has been fundamental. While contributing to the development of the CPS, Tdh has also been careful to take account of the large, culturally distinct minority groups that exist in Albania. This includes the Roma and 'Egyptian' communities who are for the most part socially excluded and extremely impoverished.

At the start of Tdh's involvement in Albania in 1999, child protection provision was at a very low level. This was following the demise of communism in Albania, when the new Republic had to establish social services as the country was left with very little State social care provision. Social services offices were established within Municipalities, but their main task was to process social assistance payments. With the change to a more democratic society and capitalist economy, there was also considerable migration from rural areas to the cities. This caused disruption to traditional family and kin networks, and in turn produced serious negative impacts on increasing numbers of children. Finally, there was no possibility of public, or even professional, discourse about abuse of children in families, especially not domestic violence or child sexual abuse.

Albania has since received support for development from Western Governments and global institutions such as the World Bank. International Non-Governmental Organisations (INGOs) have also been active in education, and child health and welfare. Despite ongoing commitment to reform of government structures, a lack of funding, insufficient capacities for planning and implementing social services, and local political traditions have hindered the development of stable and effective municipal social services. Overall, aside from the existence of a few residential institutions, formal child protection has only emerged fairly recently. Against this backdrop, Tdh, UNICEF and other INGOs, such as World Vision and Save the Children, have been active in providing support and resources to local government child protective structures, but also central institutions and families, and initiating and strengthening the capacity of governmental structures, local Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and Community Based Organisations (CBOs). Much of Tdh's work has been co-ordinated through a suite of funded projects and programmes.

## Section 2 – Methodology for the Institutional Learning Process

The Institutional Learning Process, also known as a Capitalisation Study was commissioned to reflect, identify and document the knowledge and lessons learned across the various programmes Tdh has contributed to in Albania. It was envisaged that by using a systematic, reflective and participatory approach, experience would be transformed into institutional capital. This could then be used to inform developments by Tdh and others elsewhere. The Institutional Learning Process involved desk research in which an extensive collection of documents was reviewed. Stakeholders were also invited to contribute to the Institutional Learning Process via interviews and focus groups in Albania and elsewhere. The final phase engaged with key Tdh staff in a facilitated workshop in the Tdh regional office in Budapest.

## Section 3 – Chronology of Tdh's work in Albania

Tdh has been working in Albania for over 15 years. While the focus of the Institutional Learning Process was primarily on the TACT and CPSN projects, others have played a significant part in the development of child protection in Albania. A chronology is available as an [online interactive timeline](#). Some of the projects and programmes referred to in the timeline are described in this report, including:

*PRAEVE* Prevention, Reintegration & Assistance for Child Victims of Exile (2000-2001)

*TACT* Transnational Action against Child Trafficking (2001-2003) & TACT II (2004-2006)

TACT involved a close partnership between Tdh Albania and ARSIS. Teams of Greek and Albanian social workers applied an adapted version of the 'street child system' in Greece. A range of NGO activities took place within four intervention axes, namely prevention, protection, assisted voluntary return and reintegration. All underpinned by a coordination axis. At the time, the transnational nature of the work was innovative. Indeed, one of the key achievements of TACT & TACT II was the 2006 bilateral agreement between the Greek and Albanian Governments on "The Protection and Assistance of Child Victims of Trafficking".

*TACT III* (2007-2009)

TACT III continued the work of previous projects, with an overall objective to be actively engaged in solutions to fight child trafficking. Significantly, TACT III also included a shift from anti-trafficking action into a wider child protection framework. This shift was made possible through the development of Child Protection Units (CPUs). A pilot phase of 11 Municipal CPUs was initiated and funded by international donors, in parallel to TACT III. Tdh was responsible for supporting seven CPUs and for training and ongoing expert consultancy to the personnel in all pilot CPUs. The first partnership with a Roma organisation was also initiated as part of TACT III. This involved awareness raising and income generation activities, as well as pushing for political involvement of Roma organisations in child protection. By the end of TACT III, Tdh was continuing to reduce its local direct services to children and families and rather to focus its activities into a range of strategic, capacity-building measures. This became the CPSN programme.

*CPSN* Developing a Child Protection Safety Net (2009-2012)

CPSN focused on building a functional system of protection for children at risk of or victims of abuse, exploitation or trafficking. This included scaling up Child Protection Units within local Government as well as strengthening the implementation of care standards in residential institutions. The competences and capacities of formal and non-formal actors in the CPS were also developed. This included building up protective services through ongoing support of the school psychologist role and empowering vulnerable community members. These activities were underpinned by strong advocacy with the intent of institutionalising the different CPS structures.

## Section 4 – From anti-trafficking to Developing a Child Protection System in Albania

Section 4 describes the underlying drivers behind the above projects and programmes, how there was a move from transnational work focused on addressing child trafficking to developing the wider child protection system in Albania. The situation at the end of 2013 is also outlined, including Tdh's contribution to the creation and passing of the 2010 Law "For the Protection of the Rights of the Child". This law put the emerging local CPUs on a statutory basis, and created a regional (Children's Rights Units) and national (State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights) infrastructure to oversee and support the system.

This section concludes by comparing the Tdh Thematic Policy on "Enhancing Child Protection Systems" (Feneyrol, 2011) with practice in Albania.

## Section 5 – Systemic Practice 'Principles' derived from the TACT projects and CPSN

In Section 5, the lessons learned from these projects have then been grouped into practice principles. These principles could be seen to underpin the full range of Tdh's activity in Albania. Some of the principles are still at the emergent stage, while others are strongly based in the values of Tdh and its staff.

### Systemic Practice Principle I – Start with and follow the child

TACT initiated the principle of starting with and following the child. This was based on a very practical, operational approach developed around the known stages of children at risk of being trafficked, namely school dropout, street work, exile, then return and/or reintegration (Stoecklin & Tournecuillert, 2004). The approach focused on meeting the needs and wishes of children, while always considering the wider context to promote their best interests and avoid further harm. With TACT, Tdh also succeeded in implementing this principle in a transnational context, in that they followed the children across a national border. They found partners in Greece who would work with them, and local Albanian NGOs, in a 'cross-border', or transnational alliance. This was very innovative at that time and it remains the case. Despite a large number of children moving across borders, child protection remains mainly perceived as a national issue. TACT II demonstrated the importance of transnational protection of children 'on the move' and many of its experiences are taken up in the international campaign Destination Unknown (www.destinationunknown.org). TACT & TACT II also highlighted the importance of remaining in touch with the realities of children themselves, in particular the changing patterns of child trafficking. While TACT III and CPSN acknowledged the need to

mainstream vertical child protection issues, such as child trafficking, into a broader child protection system.

It is acknowledged that "Tdh put the child at the centre" (NGO Director) demonstrating that this principle is fundamental to Tdh's work.

## Systemic Practice Principle II – Consider the whole system

Components that underpin the development of a shared vision for child protection are described. Examples of pioneering system development are used to illustrate how collaboration can help to build capacity of the child protection workforce while also raising public awareness. Significant efforts have been applied to the latter, given the initial low levels of child protection awareness. Ultimately, the goal is to move towards normalisation of child protection mechanisms, such that everyone within society recognises their own responsibility for protecting children.

Developing practice is another component that has involved undertaking pilot projects and modelling direct services. Effective approaches have been identified and scaled up, as happened with the CPUs. While the Government is responsible for scaling in terms of geographical coverage, i.e. across the whole country, Tdh have continued to provide expertise to support consistent practice. Tdh have also provided consultancy to CPU workers in difficult cases, thus scaling in the sense of deepening or sustaining impact.

While one organisation or one project cannot address all aspects in all sub-systems at any one time, awareness of the wider system is crucial so that project interventions do not remain in silos, but can be linked up to become systemic intervention. The Director of an Albanian NGO highlighted that these projects have achieved

> *"a holistic approach, both from the perspective of addressing the whole system (such as professionals working together and public awareness), but also when working with individual children. In 2000, problems were tackled one-by-one, now we start with an overall assessment of the child, their context and family. And we have plans for each child in a family."* (NGO Director)

## Systemic Practice Principle III – Experiment, embed, support

Piloting and encouraging the roll out of successful practices is seen in many aspects of Tdh's work. This principle is described as involving three interlocking phases: Experiment and demonstrate effective models; Embed with a view to extending the reach of interventions; and Support to empower stakeholders in the longer-term.

Experimenting, particularly where it leads to demonstrations of effective models is a role that Tdh have fulfilled from the start. For example, PRAEVE provided an effective demonstration of anti-trafficking practice – from how to embark on successful street work with trafficked children, to conducting awareness-raising and other preventative strategies in communities of origin. Demonstrations of how a concept can work are vital to convince others, and thereby increase uptake and implementation elsewhere.

Embedding can be planned from the start, and should seek to extend the reach or range of uptake of interventions. The latter will require building the capacity of local staff by cascading learning, not just delivering directly. This was seen in TACT III when there was a change in focus from maintaining successful services to more strategic capacity-building

measures, i.e. conducting training for school psychologists rather than providing specialist psychological services, and developing manuals for new child protection personnel rather than seeking to run more CPUs.

Supporting stakeholders to continue to embed and develop the system themselves means stakeholders are empowered for the longer-term.

### Systemic Practice Principle IV – Commitment to partnership working

Partnership working is seen as unique in Albania. This was partially about leadership, and from the start Tdh encouraged partnership working by modelling good practice within the teams. Staff also model good practice in their everyday practice, striving to empower partners at all levels. Tdh partnerships cover a wide range, starting with children and families, as well as working with communities and CBOs, local Government units and Ministries, NGOs and INGOs, the UN and other international donors.

During the build up to TACT III, the concept of partnership working changed. Tdh had been accustomed to working through partners in order to reach the real target. This shifted as it was realised that Tdh needed to work with partners and move towards working for partners. The suggestion is not that one approach is exclusively better than the others, but rather that long-term empowerment of local stakeholders has to move towards working for partners, once they have developed the capacity needed to operate independently. The report includes examples of partnership working that aimed to empower three target groups.

### Systemic Practice Principle V – Working in an 'evolutionary' way with the intent of achieving sustainability

Across the lifetime of the TACT and CPSN projects, there were a number of shifts in focus. These were often pragmatic changes in direction, sometimes paralleling changes in approach of the wider development community. Perhaps the most obvious shift was the move from anti-trafficking to child protection. From TACT through to TACT III, there was also a shift in emphasis, "a move from needs to rights based" (Tdh Delegate). Thus, Tdh Delegates and staff have had to be adaptable to move with and/or lead in relation to these shifts. This can be seen as a way of working that is 'evolutionary', i.e. being open to change in focus or direction, but with "a guiding spirit or shift in focus onto sustainability" (Tdh Delegate).

The report provides an overview of the kinds of characteristics or attributes of evolutionary programme leadership, all of which have been displayed by Tdh teams. The evolutionary approach starts with being open to building on progress made by previous projects and staff, while adapting to current opportunities. Remaining attuned to opportunities requires ongoing communication with key stakeholders. In some cases, it could involve taking an alternative view in order to work around apparent barriers. Awareness of the value of evidence is an attribute with growing importance, especially given the current drive for effective evaluation. This evolutionary approach also means being open to experimentation or seeing what works in a given context.

Finally, programme leaders and team members need to recognise that the team itself may also need to evolve.

### Systemic Practice Principle VI – Valuing evidence

Having evidence of the need for an intervention is just as vital as being able to demonstrate any benefits of undertaking that intervention. Evidence can be used at a variety of levels, but it does take time and resource to collect and analyse, and requirements for rigorous impact evidence are likely to increase in future. Evidence is a valuable advocacy and practice development tool for informing and influencing a range of stakeholders, from children to funders and from policy makers to practitioners. The report includes examples of where evidence has been used effectively to inform each of these stakeholder groups.

## Section 6 – A window into the future?

In a relatively short space of time, considerable progress has been made towards the creation of a comprehensive, national, child protection framework in Albania. The Institutional Learning Process analyses the past and opens a window into the future - a 'possible' future for Tdh as it continues to make strategic interventions to strengthen child protection in Albania and elsewhere. Through the Institutional Learning Process a number of child protection system development principles have been identified. Some of these principles could equally apply in other development contexts. The report concludes by identifying three organisational commitments that have informed Tdh strategy and practice throughout the period under review.

1. Commitment to maintaining and sharing child protection practice expertise, allied to a community-empowerment vision among marginalised communities.
2. Commitment to multiple capacity-building collaborations including community collaborations, local NGO collaborations, INGO collaborations, and State collaborations.
3. Commitment to a sustained but not static approach to projects which progressively build the capacity of local state and NGO stakeholders..

# 1    Background – working towards a shared vision for child protection in Albania

## 1.1    Terre des hommes' engagement in Albania

This report critically analyses the impact and effectiveness of Terre des hommes' (Tdh) engagement in Albania over the last 14 years. It also looks at the role Tdh has played in the emergence of a State child protection system in the country. Arguably, this started around the turn of the century, when Tdh began to work with local partners, International Non-Government Organisations (INGOs) and ultimately the Government of Albania, on the challenge of cross-border trafficking of Roma, 'Egyptian' and other vulnerable children from Albania into Greece. The long-term focus for Tdh has been on protecting children, and successive teams have sought to ground their work in the experiences of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children. Working closely with front-line professionals involved in providing care and protection to these children has also been fundamental. In addition, child protection system development in Albania has had to take account of the existence of large, culturally distinct, minority groups that are in the main socially excluded and extremely impoverished – the Roma and 'Egyptian' communities. Tdh and other INGOs active in child protection have been careful not to attribute the vulnerability of Roma and 'Egyptian' children to their culture, but rather to the severe poverty they experience and the discrimination that their families face.

The organisation has provided direct services, including street work and assistance through case management of child victims and children at risk of trafficking delivered by its own social workers. Some of the latter have gradually transitioned to become employees of Municipalities. While remaining grounded in the experiences of children and the practice of front line workers, Tdh has consciously sought to move the organisation's focus away from direct service provision towards more strategic interventions. This approach is multi-faceted as it aims to support the Government to carry out its role as the provider and guarantor of child protection in Albania. It combines advocacy towards decision makers, capacity-building of professionals, and supporting public campaigns and community initiatives with some of the most impoverished groups. Tdh staff have actively participated in multiple partnerships and collaborations that have supported this vision of Tdh playing a support role, or taking a more strategic, developmental (system-building) approach – both top-down and bottom-up – to meeting children's needs and upholding their rights.

To gain perspective and learn lessons from their years of engagement in Albania, Tdh commissioned an externally-led Institutional Learning Process, resulting in this report. The Institutional Learning Process sought to review the history of programme development in Albania, identify key achievements, and synthesise learning into principles and methods. The Institutional Learning Process recognised factors particular to Albania, while also acknowledging the international shift towards more systematic, multi-faceted and rights-based approaches to family support and child protection. This report tells the story of a developing child protection system in Albania and identifies the strategies and practices that have underpinned the substantial gains made to date. It also identifies key lessons about the role of INGOs in strengthening indigenous capacities and governmental policies and strategies, ultimately, the only way to create a sustainable child protection system.

## 1.2   The extent of child protection provision at the start of Tdh's involvement

Following the demise of communism in Albania, the new republic had to establish social services as the country was left with very little state social care provision. Social services offices were established within Municipalities, but their main task was to process social assistance payments; mainly small pensions for families with disabled children. Residential institutions were the only form of State child welfare provision. During the mid-1990s, with various external interventions, most of these relatively large-scale children's homes were downsized and material conditions improved.

In this first decade of the new nation, however, the State and Municipalities did not employ any social workers. Indeed, there were no social work education or professional development courses to supply a trained workforce. Albania did not have the model of the 'Centres for Social Work' found in the neighbouring countries of the former Yugoslavia. In these countries, there were university courses for social workers and social pedagogues and some form of personal social work was undertaken, although in practice the great majority of staff were social assistance administrators disbursing cash pensions.

Albania also lacked civil society organisations as the Communist Party had previously assumed all social and community responsibilities. There was also an absence of faith-based social welfare provisions, as religious observance was made illegal in the late 1960s. (These did develop later, with the support of foreign partners.)

With the change from communism to a more democratic society and capitalist economy, there was considerable migration from rural areas to the cities. This migration, as with similar patterns in other developing or transition countries, caused much disruption to traditional family and kin networks. This in turn produced serious negative impacts on increasing numbers of children, especially from the Roma and 'Egyptian' communities, who were beginning to congregate in certain peripheral areas in Tirana and other larger municipalities. Under communism, parents had been hindered from moving about. Furthermore, they were held responsible for making sure their children were enrolled for school, although children, especially the girls, did tend to drop out after only a few years of basic education (Interview with Head Teacher). Also see Box 1. According to another source, "All Roma children used to attend school, as it was not part of Roma culture to discourage children from attending school"(NGO Director).

> **Box 1 - Changing patterns of educational attainment among the Roma**
>
> The Roma constitute a significant minority within Albania. They are also an especially disadvantaged and socially excluded group. Exact numbers of Roma, and other similar minority groups such as the Egyptians, are not known, although some estimates have been made in various populations censuses.
>
> It has been claimed that "the educational level of Roma and Egyptians improved significantly during the socialist period, due to the educational policies and measures taken to integrate them in society" (Gëdeshi & Miluka, 2012). Yet in the transition years after communism, educational attendance and attainment declined due to unemployment, poverty, discrimination and social exclusion. The extreme poverty of many Roma families means that historically Roma children have often contributed to family income through participation in various forms of work, including begging.

Finally, the whole issue of child abuse could not be talked about in these terms. Simply put, at the start of Tdh's involvement, there was no possibility of public, or even professional, discourse about abuse of children in families, especially not child sexual abuse.

## 1.3    Improving child protection and the Albanian context

There is widespread agreement about the need to move from single-focus, project-based approaches towards a more integrated and systematic approach to child protection (UNICEF, 2008). Countries in many parts of the world seek to improve their protection of children by developing a rights-based nation-wide system populated with services that are locally based and culturally sensitive. A report on child protection systems notes:

> "This new approach aims to move the child protection sector away from isolated, disconnected projects towards a more systematic policy development and programming that considers the child and family in a more holistic fashion and better coordinates national efforts on all levels." (UNICEF, 2011)

In the case of Albania, its size and relatively small population (2.8 million, 2011 estimate) offers some advantages in establishing a nation-wide system of child protection. Even so, its previous isolation from other countries and the legacy of communist rule, which ended in 1991, means Albania started from a low base in its development of a social services infrastructure. Overall this has:

> "… seriously affected the capacity of Albanian families to provide a protective and nurturing environment for their children. The transition from one of the most uncompromising centralised economies of the communist nations towards a free market economy left many families without any social protection whatsoever. Moreover, drastic demographic shifts weakened traditional informal community-based protection networks that once assisted families." (Westwater & Jovanovic, 2009, p12)

Albania has received support for development from Western Governments and global institutions such as the World Bank. INGOs have also been active in education, and child health and welfare. There has not, however, been a tradition of local Non-Government Organisations (NGOs) or Community Based Organisations (CBOs), although that has changed to some extent with the end of communism. Overall, aside from the existence of a few residential institutions, formal child protection has only emerged fairly recently. Despite ongoing commitment to reform of government structures, a lack of funding, insufficient capacities for planning and implementing social services, and local political traditions have hindered the development of stable and effective municipal social services. Against this backdrop, Tdh, UNICEF and other INGOs, such as World Vision and Save the Children, have been active in providing support and resources to families, localities, and the Government, and initiating and strengthening the capacity of governmental structures, local NGOs and CBOs.

# 2    Methodology for the Institutional Learning Process

The Institutional Learning Process, also known as a Capitalisation Study, was intended to reflect, identify and document the knowledge and lessons learned across the various programmes Tdh has contributed to in Albania. It was envisaged that by using a systematic, reflective and participatory approach, experience would be transformed into institutional capital. This could then be used to inform developments by Tdh and others elsewhere. A previous capitalisation study had highlighted that "to capitalise on experience is to recount the path travelled" (Stoecklin & Tournecuillert, 2004). Indeed, the latter study found participants benefited from the "opportunity to talk collectively about their work … [as it] gave both motivation and commitment a fresh boost". Similar benefits were seen in the facilitated stakeholder interactions described below. Thus the process of reflecting on and capturing knowledge had benefits in itself.

## 2.1    Desk research

An extensive collection of documents was made available to the consultants (approximately 135 files). This included documents relating to the Transnational Action against Child Trafficking (TACT) I, II & III, and Child Protection Safety Net (CPSN) projects, such as proposals, log-frames, project reports, evaluation reports, peer reviews and community publications. Public-facing documents were also shared, and the consultants collated others from the Tdh website (such as research on child-trafficking from Albania, guides and handbooks on preventing child-trafficking and establishing Child Protection Units (CPUs), and thematic policy documents). Documents specifically referenced or used as part of the Institutional Learning Process are listed in Appendix I.

## 2.2    Stakeholder interactions

Stakeholders engaged with the Institutional Learning Process via interviews and focus groups in Albania. The consultants also interviewed (via telephone or skype) other individuals who had been significantly involved in the TACT and/or CPSN projects. The individuals who took part, along with their roles, are given in Appendix II.

The full range of questions used is listed in Appendix III. During the data collection, questions were selected as appropriate to the stakeholder. The intent was to identify individuals' and their organisations' place or role in the development of the TACT and CPSN projects, and subsequently how the projects operated and involved people. Indeed, partnership working was discussed with most stakeholders. This resulted in a strong focus on individual perceptions of key achievements and impact, as well as consideration of barriers and enablers to progress. The detail of how CPUs were established and rolled out across Albania was addressed, along with aspects of the wider Child Protection System. Contextual factors particular to Albania were also reflected upon.

The final phase of engaging with stakeholders involved a workshop with key Tdh staff in Budapest-Tdh Regional Office. This included presenting findings up till that time, alongside facilitated opportunities for reflection and comment.

# 3 Chronology of Tdh's work in Albania

Terre des hommes has been implementing projects and working in Albania for over 15 years. While the focus of the Institutional Learning Process was primarily on the TACT and CPSN projects, other projects have played a significant part in the development of child protection in Albania. The chronology or timeline in Figures 1a & b covers the period 1995-2014. A range of projects and initiatives are referred to, alongside developments in Albanian legal and social infrastructure, and key NGO and INGO activities and publications. The online interactive timeline includes more detail against each item, as well as web links where relevant. The timeline graphic also highlights how different partners interacted and took on different roles across the given timescale. Partners supported and helped each other to develop, sometimes swapping roles, so very much a mutually beneficial arrangement.

Some of the projects referred to in the timeline, including PRAEVE, TACT I, II & III, and CPSN, are outlined below. Subsequently, Section 4 describes the underlying drivers behind these projects, how there was a move from prevention of child trafficking to developing the child protection system in Albania, and how this relates to the situation at the end of 2013. In Section 5, the lessons learned from these projects have then been grouped into principles of working, which could be seen to underpin the full range of Tdh's activity in Albania.

## 3.1 PRAEVE – Prevention, Reintegration & Assistance for Child Victims of Exile (2000-2001)

Tdh implemented PRAEVE together with Help for Children (NPF), with the agreement of the Albanian authorities. The programme received support from UNICEF and the Oak Foundation. PRAEVE aimed to reduce the risk of 'relocation' by making 3,000 children (from Elbasan and Korça regions) aware of the risks they could face, and what to do to protect themselves. With the support of schools and parents, the project set up a recording and identification system for children at risk, as well as a system of direct intervention for high-risk children. To raise awareness, PRAEVE produced and distributed materials to children and young people (including comics, posters, and videos). Teaching materials about school dropout and the risks of street life were prepared for teachers. A photo identification file was also created for each child identified as being at risk to support tracking of children. (Adapted from Kane, 2005.)

## 3.2 TACT – Transnational Action against Child Trafficking (2001-2003) & TACT II (2004-2006)

The TACT project was a much more substantial project building upon the PRAEVE initiative. It was based on a close partnership between Tdh Albania and ARSIS, a Greek childcare NGO. The Albania NGO coalition (BKTF) established with the support of Tdh and a few other local NGOs, also joined the partnership later on. The US Agency for International Development (USAID), UNICEF, the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA), the Oak Foundation, and the National Albanian-American Council provided funding for TACT I & II. TACT involved the creation of a mixed team comprising Greek social workers, Albanian social workers living in Greece, plus Albanian social workers living in Albania and working on short-term cross-border assignments with TACT in Greece.

In partnership with the University of Freiburg, TACT adapted a methodology called the 'street child system'. This was originally developed on the basis of interventions with children in Rio de Janeiro (Lucchini, 1993). This approach and the way it informed the development of plans and activities is revealed in a series of publications (Philippe & Tournecuillert, 2003; Stoecklin & Tournecuillert, 2004; Shuteriqi, Pippidou, & Stoecklin, 2006; Dottridge, 2007). Thus, TACT was based on a commitment to view "every child as a social actor" and it worked within an intervention framework that had two complementary strands. For one strand the main objective was to empower the child so "his 'room to move' is expanded and consequently also his ability to make choices. The same objective is pursued … towards the family of the child, since the situation and position of the family strongly influences the child" (Shuteriqi et al., 2006, p29). The other TACT strand focused on the society or community where the child and family were based. TACT developed a range of services around these two intervention objectives.

Figure 1a The chronology of Terre des Hommes and partners involvement in child trafficking prevention and child protection, along with relevant developments in legislation and Social Services in Albania (part 1).
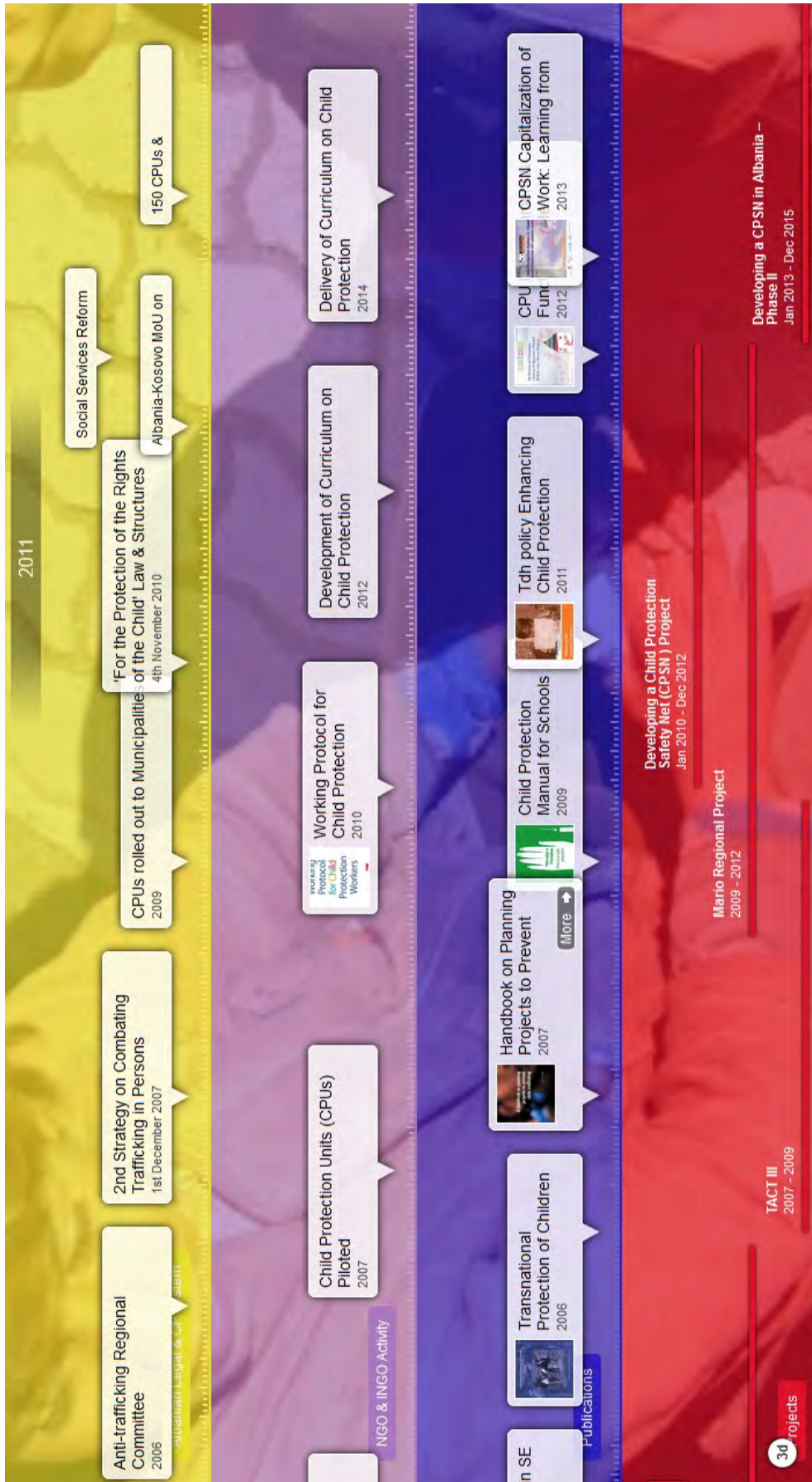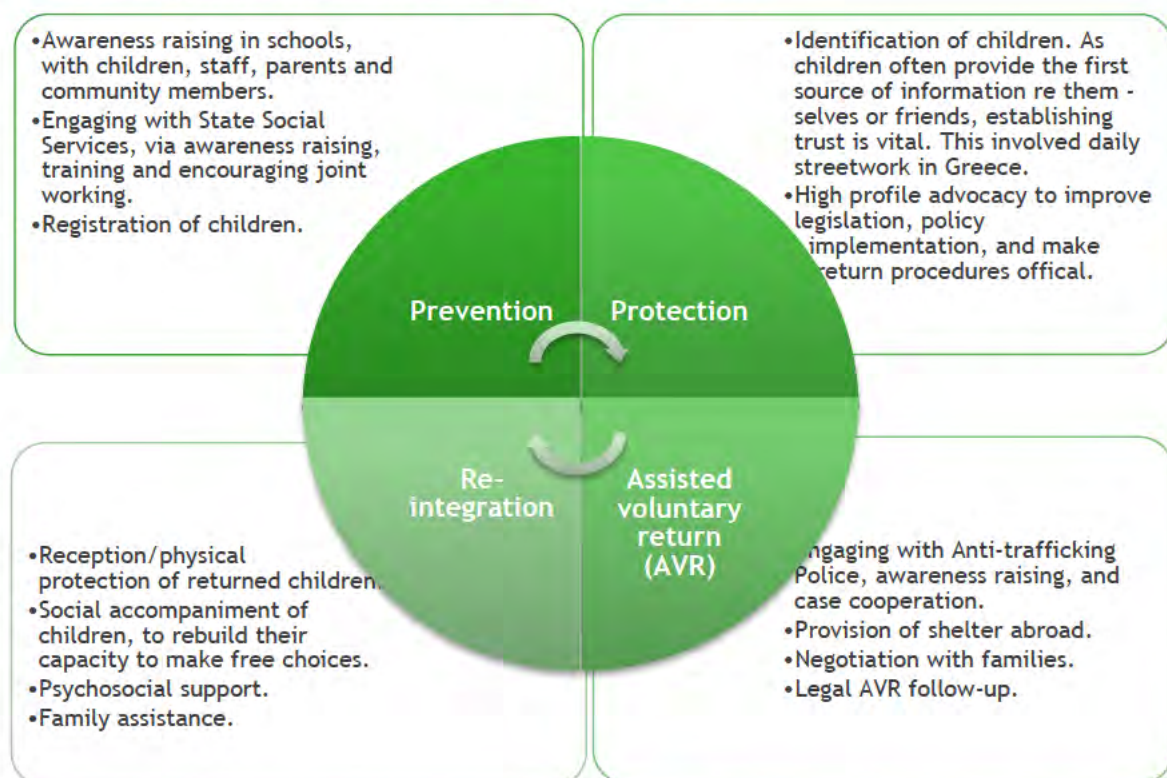
Figure 1b – The chronology of Terre des Hommes and partners involvement in child trafficking prevention and child protection, along with relevant developments in legislation and Social Services in Albania (part 2).

The full range of NGO activities took place within four intervention 'axes', where activities were matched to the needs of the children and families at different stages in the potential trafficking journey and return home. The axes were defined as prevention, protection, Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR) and reintegration. Reintegration was seen as the ultimate and most important goal. Figure 2 provides some examples of the kinds of activities that might take place within each axis. (See Stoecklin & Tournecuillert (2004) for the full range of activities.) Yet most activities need to take place in two or three axes, which highlighted the need for a further axis relating to the workers only (rather than the children). This was 'coordination', meaning coordination amongst NGOs and public services.

Figure 2 Axes of activities to combat trafficking of Albanian children.



- Awareness raising in schools, with children, staff, parents and community members.
- Engaging with State Social Services, via awareness raising, training and encouraging joint working.
- Registration of children.

- Identification of children. As children often provide the first source of information re them-selves or friends, establishing trust is vital. This involved daily streetwork in Greece.
- High profile advocacy to improve legislation, policy implementation, and make return procedures offical.

- Reception/physical protection of returned children.
- Social accompaniment of children, to rebuild their capacity to make free choices.
- Psychosocial support.
- Family assistance.

- ngaging with Anti-trafficking Police, awareness raising, and case cooperation.
- Provision of shelter abroad.
- Negotiation with families.
- Legal AVR follow-up.

Prevention / Protection / Re-integration / Assisted voluntary return (AVR)

During TACT I, 165 child victims of trafficking were identified, while 1000 children at risk of trafficking took part in the project (Philippe & Packer, 2005). As part of TACT II, approximately 350 victims of child trafficking were protected in Albania and Greece.

One of the key achievements of TACT & TACT II was the bilateral agreement between the Greek and Albanian Governments on The Protection and Assistance of Child Victims of Trafficking (2006). This was particularly significant as large-scale intervention, be that by the State or INGOs, has to be underpinned by a regulatory framework to be effective. It also underlined the innovative transnational nature of TACT and TACT II.

## 3.3    TACT III (2007-2009)

On one hand TACT III was an explicit continuation of TACT II, the overall project objective being that "duty bearers are actively engaged in solutions to fight child trafficking" (Giantris, 2009). The impact of TACT III was assessed against 12 key solutions identified at the end of TACT II. These solutions, or activities, included child rights and anti-begging campaigns; preventive psychosocial activities in the community; detection activities in the street, family and communities; accompanying children undertaking AVR; social accompaniment of former victims and children at risk; school reintegration; legal assistance, and more.

However, TACT III also included a shift from anti-trafficking action into a wider child protection framework, while simultaneously encouraging the State to take over the running of anti-trafficking/child protection measures at a community level. This shift was made possible through the development of Child Protection Units (see Box 2), which was happening in parallel with TACT III. A pilot phase of 11 Municipal CPUs was initiated and funded by UNICEF, Norad, SIDA and USAID. Three INGOs were involved in the pilot, with Tdh responsible for supporting seven out of 11 CPUs. These were established in Municipalities where the Mayor was receptive to the development of child protection services. They were set up on the basis of a planned transfer of staffing, with funding moving from 100% NGO to 100% Municipality over a period of three years. Tdh also took lead responsibility for training and ongoing expert consultancy to the personnel in all pilot CPUs. By the end of TACT III, Tdh was continuing to reduce its locality-based 'direct services' to children and families and rather to focus its activities into a range of strategic, capacity-building measures under the title of the Developing a Child Protection Safety Net (CPSN) programme. The external evaluation of TACT III, undertaken by a former USAID anti-trafficking advisor, provided strong support for this change in direction (Giantris, 2009).

> **Box 2 – The makeup and function of Child Protection Units.**
>
> Child protection Unit (CPUs) are a local government function, officially established under the 2010 Law for the Protection of Children's Rights. This requires each Municipality or Commune (in rural areas) to appoint a CPU worker. In the case of Tirana (the largest city), the CPUs are being established in Sub-Municipalities, referred to as Municipal units. The CPUs send data about their operations to the newly-established State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights, a national level monitoring body.
>
> In the larger Municipalities, building on the work of the pilots (CPUs initiated and supported by NGOs in 11 Municipalities), the CPU worker is a full-time position. However in some Municipalities the post has been filled on a part-time basis, and some appointees have taken on CPU responsibilities alongside other municipal duties. The CPUs are usually located alongside the existing Social Service Departments, whose main duties are administration of pensions (cash benefits) and oversight of many other social service functions such as responsibilities for older citizens and disabled people.
>
> The role of the CPU worker is to receive 'referrals' from other professionals, for example in health, education or the Police or from families themselves, wherever there is a concern about a child who may be in need of protection from abuse, exploitation or neglect. The duty of the CPU is to analyse the situation of the children on an individual basis and to open case-files to record progress and decision-making and coordinate the development of the individual plan for the child through a multi-disciplinary approach. The CPUs are mandated to intervene in order to protect children, reducing harm or risk of harm while maintaining children with their families wherever possible. They make an initial analysis and then may undertake an initial visit to the family to verify or find out more information. In the most serious and 'high-risk' cases the CPU officer is mandated to convene 'multi-disciplinary decision-making groups' (MDGs, commonly referred to as 'technical round-tables') where all those professionals who may be involved with the family, or who may have relevant skills are invited and share in developing the individual plan for the child, in line with the Working Protocol developed under the leadership of Tdh to guide and inform the work of the CPU Workers.
>
> The CPU officer should also take opportunities to collaborate with other professionals, and contribute to developing community awareness of children's rights and the work of their service to intervene to protect children who may be at risk.
>
> The establishment of the CPUs has progressed steadily since 2010 but they have not been established in every part of Albania. According to the Ministry of Social Welfare and Youth there were about 160 CPUs established by the end of 2013. Further development of the CPU 'roll-out' is affected by two major reform processes which are underway: reform of local government, and reform of State Social Care Services.

In addition, the first partnership with a Roma organisation was initiated as part of TACT III. This involved awareness raising and, for the first time, income generation activities, as well as pushing for political involvement of Roma in child protection. The national coalition against child trafficking (BKTF) established during TACT strengthened its membership base and Amaro-Drom and Rromani Baxt (Roma NGOs) joined the coalition and became partners of TACT III. To avoid overlap or competition, each partner's legitimacy was maintained by having distinct mandates whereby Tdh focused on child rights, but not explicitly on defending the rights of minorities.

TACT III worked to protect 737 children who were suspected victims of trafficking, and reached 60-80,000 vulnerable children via psychosocial activities, awareness raising, direct assistance to families, and indirectly via the training of school psychologists and teachers.

## 3.4    CPSN – Developing a Child Protection Safety Net (2009-2012)

CPSN entirely focused its efforts on building a functional system of protection for children at risk or victims of abuse, exploitation or trafficking. This included scaling up and working on the sustainability of CPUs within local government as well as strengthening the implementation of care standards in residential institutions. Effort was also put into developing the competences and capacities of various stakeholders including empowering non-formal actors such as vulnerable community members, see Box 3, and building up protective services through ongoing support of the new school psychologist role. In relation to the latter, Tdh staff had previously worked on sensitisation campaigns in schools, as children exposed to abuse and potential trafficking could be detected from school before they dropped out. In TACT III, it was decided to go further and empower school psychologists and teachers to be a first level of detection and protection for children at risk. These activities were underpinned by strong advocacy with the intent of institutionalising the different CP structures.

> **Box 3 – School psychologists from Fier focus on increasing parental involvement.**
>
> Previously, schools "did not invite parents' views when designing educational plans for children, and parents expected the school system to provide and care for all educational and protection needs of children, with minimal involvement from their side" (Merita Meçe, Tdh School and Community Project Coordinator).
>
> To help address these challenges, school psychologists were supported to involve all school actors. Parents were invited to 'Open House Night' events to learn about the school environment and needs for support, and to meet teachers and staff. Parents' nights were changed to include discussions on child protection, the implications of violence and abuse on children's academic performance, and the value of positive reinforcement to achieve good academic results. Awareness raising campaigns informed parents of the importance and benefits of being involved in their children's school life.
>
> "Outcomes of these initiatives have been truly great. Parents are definitely more aware and concerned about their children's academic and social progress … and understand that without their support and collaboration, schools cannot succeed!" (Silvana Koshtrica, School Psychologist, Fier).  (Adapted from Graceni, 2012.)

The CPSN project generated a great deal of valuable learning and system development at a country level, engaging as it did all the major stakeholders in the child protection field (Bradford, 2013). Under the auspices of CPSN, Tdh was able to contribute to developments at local and national levels, and to make significant contribution to the development of direct services provided by others, such as the school psychologist role and in the pilot CPU Municipalities. Tdh thus played a leading role and was widely recognised for its practice expertise. Through CPSN, Tdh personnel and funding also helped promote engagement with marginalised communities in several parts of the country and further developed innovative, income-generating, micro-financed schemes within an overall child protection framework.

CPSN actions were targeted across five strategic areas (or axes):

- Municipal Child Protection Units (CPUs), which were established and functional in nine Municipalities. Functional CPUs were seen as operating by analysing the situation of vulnerable children on a case-per-case basis and acting according to the child's need for his/her best interest.
- Child protection was strengthened in the education system in five regions.
- Eight marginalised communities were supported to be more effective in identifying and addressing key child protection issues.
- Four residential institutions for children were supported in developing the capabilities to implement and monitor the standards of care for children in their environment.
- The ability of key actors to identify and address strategic issues in a co-ordinated manner was improved.

Overall CPSN developed and tested a framework for "sustainable child protection reform in Albania, including a fairly strong legislative base; a large group of people who have increased understanding of what is going well and what is required for further reform; and a range of tested best practices" (Bradford, 2013, p22).

# 4 From anti-trafficking to Developing a Child Protection System in Albania

## 4.1 Drivers to work on the prevention of child trafficking, and to work transnationally

In the late 1990s, NPF made Tdh staff aware that children were dropping out of school and going to Greece. Having been inactive in Albania for a few years, during the conflict in neighbouring Kosovo, the Tdh delegation was subsequently re-established. Tdh then commissioned the first investigation into Albanian children trafficked to Greece, which was undertaken by Natalie Heppell over from 1999 onwards. [Video about the investigation of Working Street Children in Greece.]

At that time, there was a lack of recognition of child trafficking on the part of the Albanian and Greek governments. Early projects were thus reframed to work on prevention and protecting children who were 'victims of exile' and not 'trafficking' in order to be more politically accepted (see the description of the 3.1 PRAEVE – Prevention, Reintegration & Assistance for Child Victims of Exile (2000-2001). There was, however, growing international pressure especially from the United States. The US Victims of Trafficking and Violence Protection Act of 2000[1], and subsequent "Trafficking in persons" or TIP reports, highlighted Albania's low level of anti-trafficking activity (US Department of State, 2001 & 2002). Having undertaken detailed investigations into child trafficking

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[1] For a full listing of pertinent USA trafficking laws see: http://www.state.gov/j/tip/laws/
[1] Hamogelo and Tdh still work together on child trafficking in SE Europe, as part of the VICTOR project - http://www.hamogelo.gr/25-2/1576/VICTOR-Project-against-Child-Trafficking-in-Southeast-Europe-kicked-off-in-Bucharest

and working street children, Tdh and its partners were uniquely placed to evidence (Philippe & Tournecuillert, 2003) and influence this political agenda. Indeed, the second TIP report on Albania directly cites information from Tdh and NPF in relation to trafficked children.

In May 2001, Hamogelo ('the smile of a child', a Greek NGO) organised the 1st conference on trafficking of children to Greece. The Albanian Minister of Social Affairs attended this, and importantly, acknowledged the issue of trafficking of children. The conference, and subsequent direct work by Tdh and NPF with children exploited in Greece, marked the realisation of the need for transnational action. As expressed by the Tdh Albania Delegate at the time, "We needed to follow children on their full path". Box 4 provides an example of anticipating and being ready to respond to increased transnational child-trafficking related to major events.

> **Box 4 – Anticipating the effect of major events – the 2004 Olympic Games in Athens.**
>
> "We knew this kind of major event would influence child trafficking operations. So we [Tdh and ARSIS] sent an army of social workers to Athens during the games, to undertake intensive detection of trafficked children. ARSIS developed the team. Overall, 150 children were identified who had only come to Athens for the games. For some of these we facilitated Assisted Voluntary Return (AVR).
>
> The Greek ombudsman for children visited Albania to see what happened to the children afterwards" (Tdh Country Delegate). Also see the Emergency Response Against Child Trafficking (ERACT) Report (Adam, 2005).

## 4.2    Drivers to develop the CPS in Albania

The early TACT work focused on child trafficking. By the time of TACT III it was evident that there were fewer Albanian children on the streets in Greece, and families themselves were taking their children to beg elsewhere, rather than children being taken by a third party. The number of children trafficked was relatively small, but to continue to decrease child trafficking, investment was needed in child protection more widely. It thus became clear that a change in focus was required to improve child welfare on a wider scale. Indeed, given the absence of State child protection in Albania at that time, it was clear that it would be futile to continue working on preventing child trafficking without also working on the development of a child protection system. Furthermore, a strategy to mainstream the approaches developed by TACT & TACT II was needed, along with a sustainable approach to case management. This would mean moving on from the anti-trafficking technical round tables, which were somewhat ad-hoc. UNICEF had already started to speak globally of using a systemic approach and developing child protections systems rather than using thematic approaches. Thus when UNICEF[2] announced they were launching a new service to develop and then strengthen CPUs in the Municipalities of Kukes then Elbasan, Fier, Gjirokastra, Korca, Pogradec and Tirana, this provided an

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[2] UNICEF Child Protection System project (no date) http://www.unicef.org/albania/protection_8542.html

opportunity to invest in a service that would provide a durable structure. It was thus decided to invest effort in the concept of CPUs.

## 4.3    The Child Protection System in 2013

Over the duration of Tdh's engagement in Albania, the organisation has shifted from service delivery through specific thematic protection projects(?), towards investment in strategic partnerships and capacity building to support the development of a state social services system. Much progress has been made, and Tdh contributed to the creation and passing of the Law 'For the Protection of the Rights of the Child' (2010). This put the emerging local CPUs on a statutory basis, and created a regional (Children's Rights Units) and national (State Agency for the Protection of Children's Rights) infrastructure to oversee and support the system. The large training programme to child protection social workers, school psychologists, teachers and school directors is also evidence of the kind of multi-agency contributions that are vital for a truly systemic approach. Likewise the targeting of vulnerable marginalised communities of ethnic minorities (Roma and Egyptian) highlights the vital contribution to system development of all individuals being aware of and able to demand their rights (Bradford, 2013). This is especially important among the most disadvantaged groups, which may have strong traditions and a general mistrust of authorities (Ware, 2012). Public awareness of the concept of child abuse and the possibilities of intervention also creates the basis of public support for spending on social services.

### 4.3.1    Comparing central Tdh policy with practice in Albania

The Tdh Thematic Policy on "Enhancing Child Protection Systems" (Feneyrol, 2011) conceptualises and describes the Tdh approach to the promotion of child protection. The Thematic Policy was strongly based on the perceived good practices and achievements of Tdh's work in Albania, amongst other countries where Tdh is active. The policy would thus be expected to overlap with the current state of the Child Protection System (CPS) in Albania. This section is included, however, as it gives an opportunity to identify those aspects of the 'theory' that have been realised to date in a specific country context.

The Thematic Policy affirms a broad view of child protection issues, highlighting that it is concerned with "the rights of children as a whole", not just rights to protection from abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation. Further, it notes that child protection requires many systems to interlock and intersect:

> A CPS consists of thematic sub-systems such as the protection of children from abuse, violence, neglect and exploitation/trafficking …, juvenile justice, etc. It also intersects with other global systems such as the educational system, the justice system or the health system. (Feneyrol, 2011, p7)

This plurality of systems also involves a plurality of key actors who may operate in the formal or informal arena. Indeed, the policy draws attention to the tensions between formal and informal child protection systems, and asserts that Tdh sees the informal system as equally important, in contrast to others who may emphasise the development of the formal system. 'Social participation' thus assumes considerable importance, as does the interconnection between the two dimensions. This is a broad perspective that requires an ambitious vision and multiple actions for its realisation.
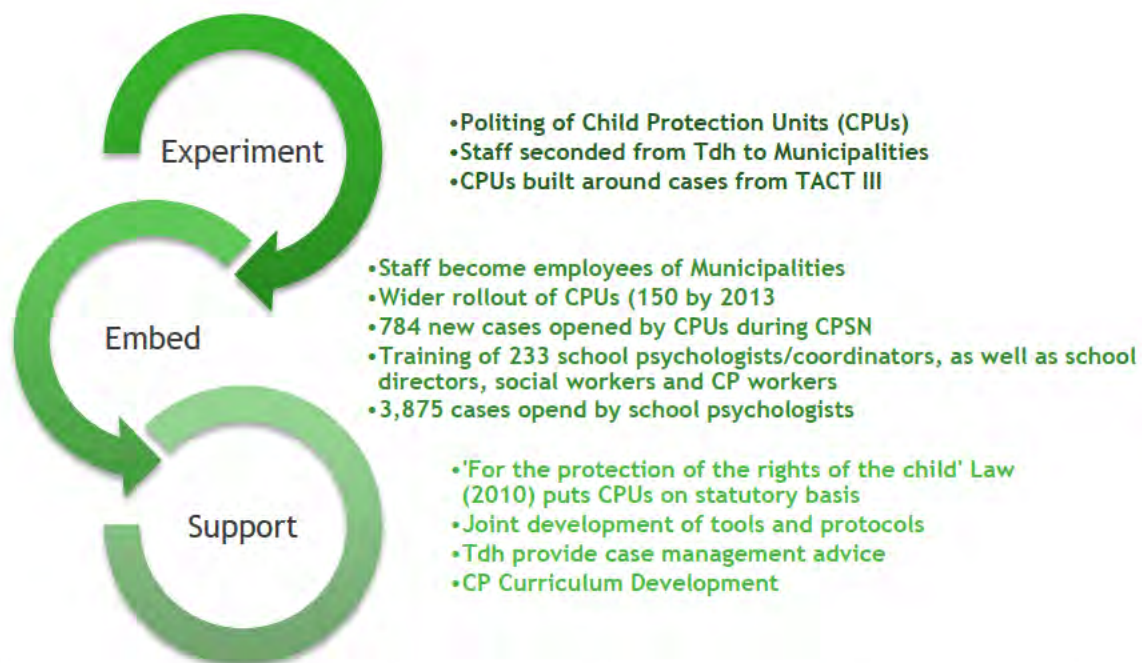
The Thematic Policy identifies four fundamental processes in which all actors can play a part, both formal and informal. Within the policy, these processes are reframed into four axes of CPS strengthening actions:

- Axis 1: Strengthening of the Protection framework, such as
  - Participating in the design and monitoring of laws & policies
- Axis 2: Strengthening of the offer of protection, such as
  - Support to the implementation of laws & policies
  - Strengthening of the competences and capacities of the formal and informal actors
- Axis 3: Strengthening of social participation, such as
  - Empowerment of children and adolescents, of girls and boys
- Axis 4: Strengthening of knowledge management [linked to children's needs & issues], such as
  - Design, experimentation and sharing of concepts, tools and experience.

Examples of all these can be seen to have informed the work undertaken by Tdh in Albania. Figure 3 provides an overview of Tdh's role in the process of CPU development (Axes 1, 2 & 4). Box 5 demonstrates the potential beneficial outcomes of effective Multi-disciplinary Groups (Axes 2 & 3).

Figure 3 The development of Child Protection Units, and Tdh's involvement in this process.



**Experiment**
- Politing of Child Protection Units (CPUs)
- Staff seconded from Tdh to Municipalities
- CPUs built around cases from TACT III

**Embed**
- Staff become employees of Municipalities
- Wider rollout of CPUs (150 by 2013
- 784 new cases opened by CPUs during CPSN
- Training of 233 school psychologists/coordinators, as well as school directors, social workers and CP workers
- 3,875 cases opend by school psychologists

**Support**
- 'For the protection of the rights of the child' Law (2010) puts CPUs on statutory basis
- Joint development of tools and protocols
- Tdh provide case management advice
- CP Curriculum Development

The passing of the 2010 law was a major milestone in the development of the formal child protection system, setting CPUs on a statutory basis and requiring them to be established in all Municipalities and Communes, in line with the strong overall trend of de-centralisation of Government. This represents a significant example of strengthening of the protection framework and expanding the offer of protection (Axes 1 & 2). (Although it is acknowledged that resources were not made available to support the appointment of staff in all areas. Furthermore, there is an ongoing shortfall in understanding what child

protection is in practice and what skills may be required to undertake the local child protection role within Municipalities.) Nevertheless, Government officials report that the roll out of CPU structures continues. Being caught up in two major reform processes currently happening in Albania does, however, complicate this. Reform of social services and of local government will see the reduction in the number of Municipalities and Communes from 360 to approximately 100.

As noted in 4.2 Drivers to develop the CPS in Albania, UNICEF initiated the CPU concept and invited INGOs to take responsibility for the development of CPUs in various Municipalities. Tdh played a key role in recognising the opportunity and working hard to make them effective by recruiting, training and providing ongoing support to staff. Tdh worked out a system of co-funding whereby they provided a decreasing share of the funding of CPUs in partnership with Mayors of seven Municipalities. The Municipalities subsequently took over the employment of the staff from Tdh and established them on a permanent basis from within municipal budgets. These CPUs were seen as good examples of the *"best functioning CPUs as a consequence of Tdh's approach to CPW supervision and job coaching"* (Head of UNICEF Albania).

> **Box 5 – The benefits of interventions supported by a Multi-disciplinary Group – Claudia's story, age 11**
>
> Claudia told her classmates she's spent nights outside. Her classmates spoke to their teacher, who referred the case to the local Child Protection Unit worker. The CPU worker and a police officer visited Claudia's family, who lived in an isolated area some distance from Claudia's school. When they arrived, Claudia's mother was aggressive and threatened the visitors, but they were able to speak to Claudia and her father. It was agreed that Claudia would move to a children's home.
>
> Shortly after, the local Multi-disciplinary Group (MDG) met to discuss the case and agree how to support Claudia and her family. This led to the family receiving support to improve their living conditions, and Claudia's mother having a health check. The mother was taken to hospital, with a police officer, where she was prescribed medication.
>
> Claudia ended up staying in the children's home for six months. She was then reunited with her family, who now live near her school. Claudia has a school uniform and all her books. The CPU worker was delighted with this positive outcome, and somewhat surprised to be warmly welcomed by Claudia's mother when she subsequently visited their home.

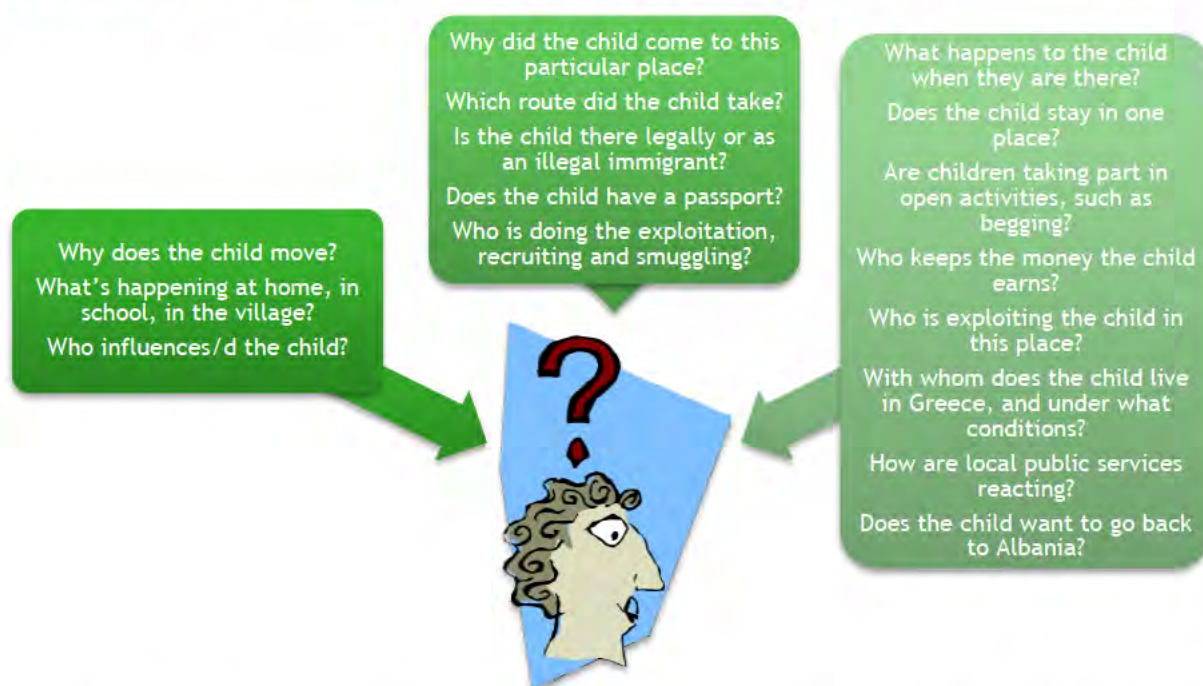# 5 Systemic Practice Principles derived from The TACT projects and CPSN

This section collates the practice principles that have evolved over the course of the TACT I, II & III and CPSN projects. Some of these are strongly based in the values of Tdh and its staff, but they have also been shown to be both practical and necessary in developing a sustainable child protection system. Some of the principles are still at the emergent stage, for example, as the organisation focuses on evidence and building a knowledge base to demonstrate impact and progress practice. Lessons learned from Tdh's engagement in Albania over the last 14 years, along with stakeholders' views on the key achievements of TACT and CPSN are also included to further illustrate each principle.

## 5.1 Start with and follow the child – across borders if necessary

It is important to recognise that Tdh undertook a major innovation by seeking to work across a national border, the one between Albania and Greece, rather than seeking to set up two separate national responses to the issue, which might have been a more conventional response. Although based in Albania, they tackled the child trafficking problem along the whole length of the trafficking route from the home villages in Albania, to the streets of Greek cities, at border points and back to Albania. Most child protection work is constrained by national boundaries. Each nation has its own history of responses to child protection within its own cultural, historical and legislative context, and NGO activity is nearly always undertaken in one particular country, with funding allocated in this way. Tdh envisaged the problem as a single problem and sought out a local, Greek NGO that was concerned about 'street children', and formed a partnership with them. Of course it was not simple or straightforward to operationalise this approach, which required negotiations with two sets of government bodies, police forces, border agencies, and other relevant authorities.

The TACT project thus initiated the principle of starting with and following the child. From early on a very practical, operational approach was used that engaged a mixed team of Greek and Albanian social workers on the streets of Thessaloniki. This provided the flexibility needed in terms of language requirements, i.e. children could choose to communicate in Albanian or Greek, and social workers could advocate on their behalf in the appropriate working language. A systematic approach was developed around the concept of the "'career' of a trafficked child" or known stages of children at risk of being trafficked, namely school dropout, street work, exile, then return and/or reintegration (Stoecklin & Tournecuillert, 2004). Actions to support children at these different stages have been documented (ibid; Dottridge, 2007). The approach focused on meeting the needs and wishes of children. As shown in Figure 4, this meant asking questions about the child and his or her context.

Figure 4 Some of the questions that need to be addressed in tackling child trafficking.

Why does the child move?
What's happening at home, in school, in the village?
Who influences/d the child?

Why did the child come to this particular place?
Which route did the child take?
Is the child there legally or as an illegal immigrant?
Does the child have a passport?
Who is doing the exploitation, recruiting and smuggling?

What happens to the child when they are there?
Does the child stay in one place?
Are children taking part in open activities, such as begging?
Who keeps the money the child earns?
Who is exploiting the child in this place?
With whom does the child live in Greece, and under what conditions?
How are local public services reacting?
Does the child want to go back to Albania?

It was also recognised that trafficking works from one village to another. Thus, to be able to start with and follow the path of the child, staff worked in the locations of origin, trying to improve child protection mechanisms in these places, as well as supporting those children who had already been trafficked elsewhere. A range of support is needed, as highlighted in Box 6.

> **Box 6 –To break the cycle of trafficking, children and their families need a range of support from Assisted Voluntary Return to reintegration and ongoing protection – Alketa's story**
>
> Alketa is identified during the first identification of Albanian children in Thessaloniki in 1999. She had just started to be involved in work in the streets.
>
> In 2002, Alketa is identified again. She is tired and fed up. She says "I'll come back to Albania with you only if my mother agrees". Tdh contact her mother in Korça, and she agrees. A few days later ARSIS accompanies Alketa back across the border. Once back home she restarts school and is able to catch up with her learning, so much so that she becomes the best pupil. Tdh follows the family and with support their situation improves.

The above was literally about starting with and following the child, but it is also an on-going, underlying principle that is fundamental to Tdh's work. "Tdh put the child at the centre. They respond to all requests, and don't just stick to their target categories" (NGO Director). More recently, as Tdh has moved away from provision of direct services, the principle is seen in the way that staff strive to remain in touch with practice and the reality for children. This is a recognised strength, as evidenced by the Government of Albania approaching Tdh regarding the operation of CPUs, because they were seen as one of the INGOs actively experimenting to see what works in different contexts.

The lesson of starting with and following the child identified during the PRAEVE project is still fundamental to Tdh's work. Other lessons that underlie this theme include:

- Following the child who is a victim of trafficking means setting up projects or collaborations that work across national borders.
- TACT II demonstrated the importance of remaining in touch with the realities of children themselves, in particular the changing patterns of child trafficking. By the end of TACT II, fewer Albanian children were being trafficked across the border by a third party. Yet the remaining problems of extreme poverty meant some children continued to be used for begging to supplement family income.
- It is therefore necessary to consider the wider context to best benefit children.
- If the context around children is always considered, it is possible to anticipate and develop operations without harming child victims.

What has been a key achievement of Tdh projects?

*"Creating a child-friendly environment in schools, through school clubs that have musical and sporting activities for children" (NGO representative). Working with local partners to provide fun and integrated activities is all about thinking from the child's perspective, and a great example of how to engage children who have not been attending school.*

*"TACT II and TACT III reached 800 children who were presumed victims of trafficking. These projects influenced 60-80,000 children. It was very well targeted."* (Tdh Delegate)

## 5.2    Consider the whole system

Components that underpin the development of a shared vision for child protection are given in Figure 5. The building blocks are derived from Tdh practice in Albania. The Tdh Thematic Policy describes a broader picture of what is required to form a complete functioning protection system, including the full range of sub-systems that need to intersect with the CPS. It has to be acknowledged, however, that one organisation or one project cannot address all aspects in all sub-systems at any one time. Nonetheless, awareness of the wider system is crucial so that project interventions do not remain in silos, but can be linked up to become systemic intervention. Equally, effective partnerships are central to joined-up working. This is discussed further in 5.4 Commitment to partnership working.

Figure 5 Components of the system that are needed to develop a shared vision for child protection.



## 5.2.1  Collaborate and build capacity

An example of pioneering system development work that addresses collaboration, capacity-building and raising public awareness is given in Box 7. The community worker engages with public health and CPU staff and helps them to access vulnerable communities to deliver child protection and public health information. This also establishes an effective collaboration between CPU and public health personnel when it comes to child protection concerns about particular children. This example also highlights the multifactorial nature of the system, and that to develop it requires lots of resources and different kinds of resources.

> **Box 7 – A senior public health doctor describes how collaborating with Tdh enabled access to vulnerable communities (principally Roma families with young children)**
>
> Public health staff, the CPU worker, and Tdh community worker jointly ran a 12-session programme, embedding child protection messages, including domestic violence and parenting practice, within a wider programme of health messages, including those focused on sexually transmitted diseases and family planning. This programme was offered from a clinic located in a poor neighbourhood. Public health staff had then been able to run a programme of antenatal classes for pregnant women from the same neighbourhood. Meanwhile, because of the professional relationship that had been established with the CPU worker, community nurses were confident about referring high-risk children to the CPU, and public health staff contributed to CPU initiated round table discussions of particular cases.
>
> "Always we are very sensitive about child protection and try to be in round-tables … and try to raise the voice and saying if we invest now in child protection we will have less and less cost in the future" (Senior doctor).

### 5.2.2   Raise public awareness

Raising public awareness can take place at various points. Early on in Tdh's involvement, there was little recognition of child protection as a concept in Albania. Indeed, part of TACT's activities included analysing press coverage in Albania and Greece, and challenging media untruths and bad practice (such as publishing children's names and addresses). Reviews of the press were then distributed. This had the benefit of both raising the public profile of child trafficking and child protection, and also helping partners to be critical and learn how to communicate with other partners. It also made the press more accessible, as articles were made available in languages other than Albanian and Greek. This was the beginning of the Tdh regional child protection website.

As noted in Figure 5 and Boxes 3 & 7, other activities have been about direct work with parents and community members to educate them and highlight their role in child protection. Ultimately, the goal is to move towards normalisation of child protection mechanisms, such that everyone within society (whether a professional, e.g. social workers, teachers, police, or an actor within the informal system, e.g. parent, volunteer) recognises their own responsibility for protecting children.

### 5.2.3   Develop practice

By undertaking pilot projects, effective approaches can then be identified and scaled up, as happened with the CPUs. In the case of the latter, the Government is responsible for scaling up, i.e. for developing CPUs across the whole country. Yet Tdh continue to provide expertise to support this process. For example, in the areas where it had developed the CPU pilots, Tdh provide mentoring to CPU workers in difficult cases, thus scaling in the sense of deepening or sustaining impact (HFRP, 2010). Tdh also continue to strengthen the CPU network nationally by supporting the scaling of ideas and policies, for example by developing a manual of procedures, the Guide for the Establishment & Functioning of Child Protection Units (Spahiu & Lopari, 2012). In this way, all CPUs can gain access to resources and guidance. The manual reflects learning from the pilot CPUs and by sharing it with new, less well-resourced CPUs, a better and more standardised approach to practice is encouraged across the country.

Discussion of the need to build an evidence base is covered in 5.6 Valuing evidence.

### Key lessons

Tdh's work in Albania has moved from anti-trafficking projects to a focus on developing the Child Protection System. As with the Tdh Thematic Policy, this has emphasised the importance of considering all aspects of this system as well as intersections with other related systems.

- The development and reform of a more comprehensive child protection system was made possible by undertaking a large variety of projects or activities, all of which were linked through the CPSN project.
- A sustainable child protection system requires local capacity and capability to be strengthened, and this needs to be underpinned by effective (local and central) governmental policies and strategies.
- Supporting the development of more systematic, government-funded family support services can help to keep children in school.

What has been a key achievement of TACT or CPSN?

> *"Achieving a holistic approach, both from the perspective of addressing the whole system (such as professionals working together and public awareness), but also when working with individual children.*
>
> *In 2000, problems were tackled one-by-one, now we start with an overall assessment of the child, their context and family. And we have plans for each child in a family. Now it is about prevention rather than 'curing'."* (NGO Director)

## 5.3 Experiment, embed, support – changing the strategic focus of Tdh activity

The changing nature of Tdh's role in the process of CPU development can be conceptualised as having three interlocking phases – experiment, embed and support. (See Figure 3 for a visual overview of this.) This principle of piloting and encouraging the roll out of successful practices is seen in other aspects of Tdh's work. This principle is discussed below.

### 5.3.1 Experiment and demonstrate effective models

Experimenting, particularly where it leads to demonstrations of effective models is a role that Tdh have fulfilled from the start. Two examples are:

- PRAEVE, which laid the groundwork by providing an effective demonstration of anti-trafficking practice – from how to embark on successful street work with trafficked children, to conducting awareness-raising and other preventative strategies in communities of origin.
- TACT III, which developed a model for a functioning Child Protection Unit at Municipality level.

These demonstrations of how a concept can work, help to convince others, and thereby increase the chance of uptake and implementation elsewhere.

What has been a key achievement of TACT or CPSN?

> *"The CPU initiative of Tdh, supported by UNICEF, proved that the model was successful, before the Law became established. And there are now CP workers in the whole country."* (CPU worker)

### 5.3.2 Embed with a view to extending the reach of interventions

The second phase of development identified was embedding, which can be planned from the start, but also seeks to extend the reach or range of uptake of interventions.

- There is value in planning for the transition to State ownership from the start, as evidenced by the CPU funding model. This model allowed Tdh to use its expertise to set up new CPUs in selected Municipalities with the intent that funding would gradually be taken over by the Municipality.
- Extending the reach of an initiative also means building the capacity of local staff by cascading learning, not just delivering directly. This was seen in TACT III when there was a change in focus from maintaining successful services to more strategic

capacity-building measures, i.e. conducting training for school psychologists rather than providing specialist psychological services, and developing manuals for new child protection personnel rather than seeking to run more CPUs.

What has been a key achievement of TACT or CPSN?

*"Transforming from a project that was purely service delivery into something that has contributed to inspire reforms of social services in Albania. CPUs are now part of the system, and this remains today."* (Tdh Delegate)

*"A key achievement has been the lobbying that meant CPUs were established, and that the methodology used by all CPUs is based on the same model. This is very important because if different actors use different models it would be very complicated."* (State Agency Director)

### 5.3.3   Support to empower stakeholders in the longer-term
The final phase of development identified was to support stakeholders to continue to embed and develop the system themselves, i.e. to empower stakeholders in the longer-term.

- Empowering local communities means modelling good practice at every level.
- CPSN continued Tdh's move towards supporting the work of others rather than provision of direct, localised, service itself. This was enabled through sustained efforts in collaborating with multiple partners, including international and local NGOs, central and local government actors, and selected community groups.

What has been a key achievement of TACT or CPSN?

A number of important activities which continue to empower child protection stakeholders were noted in interviews for this report, some of which have been mentioned previously. For example a number of front-line professionals mentioned the importance of the practice and procedures manuals developed by Tdh, one for CPU staff and one for educational psychologists. Tdh also continued to be active members of the children's rights coalition even when local NGOs took on a larger role, including chairing the coalition. The coalition played a key role in the development of the2010 law by, amongst other things, employing a lawyer who worked on drafting aspects of the proposed legislation. This work was offered to the government as part of the lobbying and contributed to the final shape of the legislation.

One significant benefit provided by INGOs such as Tdh is the professional job opportunities they provide for local people, and especially their willingness to employ women in professional and organisational leadership positions. As already noted numerous Albanian Tdh staff were transferred to municipal CPUs, and others, such as community workers sometimes found employment in various local NGO and municipal bodies. During the research for this report (in 2013-14) many people noted that a key civil servant and advisor to the Minister for Children was a widely admired, former Tdh employee who had played a key role in the CPSN and child protection activity more generally.

## 5.4    Commitment to partnership working

Effective partnership working is seen by many stakeholders as a particular feature of the child protection system building that has taken place in Albania in recent years. Even among other children's rights INGOs - who are sometimes in competition with each other – it was acknowledged that there had been joint discussions at the early stages of planning projects and activities.

It has been repeatedly noted throughout this report that Tdh strategy was to engage with local NGOs, to work with them to build up their capacity and then to take on more of a background role. Tdh also continued to contribute to organisations that it had initiated, such as the BKTF coalition. It also sought out key stakeholders, such as the school psychologists, to resource and empower them to play an important role in the child protection system. And of course Tdh continued to seek to influence government (at municipal and state levels) and to offer resources to these bodies.

Employment of 'animateurs' (community liaison workers) in the poorest and most marginalised communities also represented an organisational commitment to empowerment and partnership with 'communities'; including children, parents and community groups.

> **Box 8 – Empowering local communities means modelling good practice at every level.**
>
> Arjan describes how NGOs would visit his community and take pictures of people. The people didn't know why. Since then he has been part of a Community Counselling Group and he has seen how the Community Mediator always asks if she can take a photograph. She also explains how the photo will be used.
>
> Now, when anyone visits his community and takes out a camera, Arjan always asks why. He says he realises that permission should be sought. Even when the local TV station comes, Arjan says, "Stop. Why are you filming us? What do you want?" (Interview with CCG members)

During the build up to TACT III, the type of partnership working underwent change. Previously, partners had been the means for reaching the real target, i.e. Tdh had been accustomed to working through partners, with Tdh directing the work. There was, however, a shift in strategy and Tdh decided it to work more collaboratively with partners and ultimately move towards working for partners. The distinction between these three approaches is shown in Figure 6.

Figure 6 Partnership models – working through, with, and for partners.
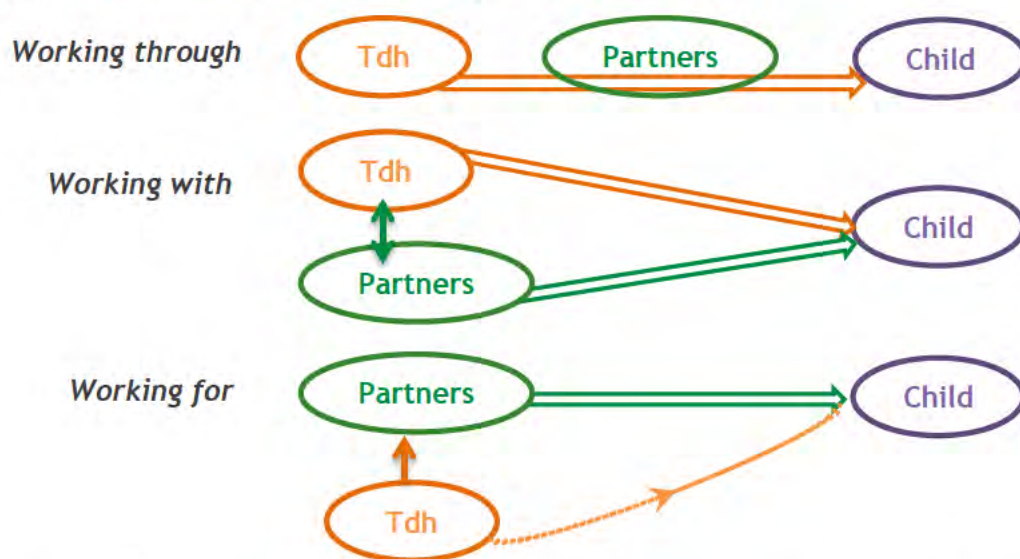


The suggestion is not that one approach is exclusively better than the others, but rather that long-term empowerment of local stakeholders has to move towards working for partners, once they have developed the capacity to lead on project work. Indeed, there may be different types of partnerships depending on the goals of those involved. Examples of partnership working that aimed to empower three target groups are given in Table 1 below.

| Target group | Working through, with or for | Example of partnership working |
|---|---|---|
| CPUs | Working through and with | As described in 3.3 TACT III (2007-2009), Tdh used its expertise to set up new CPUs in selected Municipalities. |
| | Working for | With the transition of staff to becoming full Municipality employees, Tdh lobbied for experienced and qualified people to fill CPU positions, although the actual appointment was undertaken by Municipalities. Subsequently, Tdh provided ongoing support and case management advice to CPU staff. |
| Children and schools | Working through | During TACT II, schools had provided the means to address children directly. A social worker would work through the school, and then go and speak to children. |
| | A move towards working for partners | TACT III was more about determining a person within the school to be responsible for: awareness raising within the school, identifying children at risk of dropping out, and delivering prevention activities. This became the school psychologist role (a new role in Albania). TACT III also developed and delivered a training programme for school psychologists, part of which addressed case management. |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Communities | Working with | TACT mainly worked with Roma people, even though this was not directly acknowledged as a focus for the project. Provision of services and building of child protection awareness in Roma communities arose from recognising that the Roma were even poorer than other poor Albanians. The strategy was thus for integration and child protection to be based on challenging discrimination and social exclusion. See Box 9 for a demonstration of how one Roma women felt empowered at home, and relative to Roma women in another country. |

**Box 9 – A Roma woman describes how joining the Community Counselling Group has empowered her**

"Before, I used to stay at home. My husband would not let me go out too much. Now, with the support of Tdh, I am an active member of the CCG. When Tdh took us on a study visit to Bulgaria my husband said no, but I didn't care, I went anyway. And I was impressed to see that in Bulgaria the NGO was talking for the Roma, but us we were talking for ourselves, Tdh did not tell us what to say." (CCG Member)

## Key Lessons

Partnership working is unique in Albania. Achieving this has been a result of leadership and organisational commitment, constant consultation, modelling good practice, and establishing an effective NGO network. It is also recognised that long-term empowerment of local stakeholders is about capacity building, but also moving towards working for partners, rather than just through or with.

- Effective support and partnership working with local NGOs is vital to establish links with vulnerable (Roma) communities.
- Starting out with an open attitude can enable pioneering partnerships to emerge, such as that between Tdh and local NGO NPF.
- Transnational working is necessary to effectively support children on the move. Inter-country partnerships do, however, bring their own challenges.

What has been a key achievement of TACT or CPSN?

*"TACT included a lot of actors who worked closely together. This was achieved through a lot of co-ordination activity."* (State Agency Director)

*"CPSN helped the Multi-disciplinary Group to become established by building the capacity of school psychologists, and establishing Community Counselling Groups who identify and refer cases to the CP worker. MDGs are important because different groups share experiences from different areas, and this helps understanding. "* (CPU worker)

## 5.5    Working in an 'evolutionary' way with the intent of achieving sustainability

Across the lifetime of the TACT and CPSN projects, there were a number of shifts in focus. These were often pragmatic changes in direction, sometimes paralleling changes in approach of the wider development community.  Perhaps the most obvious shift was the move from anti-trafficking to child protection, as described in 4.2 Drivers to develop the CPS in Albania. Some stakeholders in Albania would take this shift a step further, and suggest the focus now should be on social protection (Head of UNICEF, Albania). The assertion being that a more holistic social protection system would encourage linkage across all relevant sectors, such as education, health, the police, and legal sector. In some ways this is consistent with Tdh's own Thematic Policy in advocating for greater "synergies within and between protective environments" or interlocking of CPS sub-systems and other global systems (Feneyrol, 2011).

From TACT through to TACT III, there was also "a move from needs to rights based" (Tdh Delegate). This corresponded with the recognition that Tdh needed to operate not just as a direct service provider that undertook some advocacy, but also to having more of a focus on building State provision. This was demonstrated and realised in the National Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Persons (2008-2010). This State strategy reflected the approach used by Tdh in TACT III, i.e. it was child protection oriented when previously child anti-trafficking had been strongly influenced by the earlier IOM approach, and focused mainly on prosecution and return.

Tdh teams have had to be adaptable to move with and/or lead in relation to these shifts. This can be seen as a way of working that is 'evolutionary', i.e. being open to change in focus or direction, but with "a guiding spirit or shift in focus onto sustainability" (Tdh Delegate). Figure 7 provides an overview of the kinds of characteristics or attributes of evolutionary programme leadership, all of which have been displayed by Tdh Delegates and staff.

Figure 7 Attributes of evolutionary programme leadership.
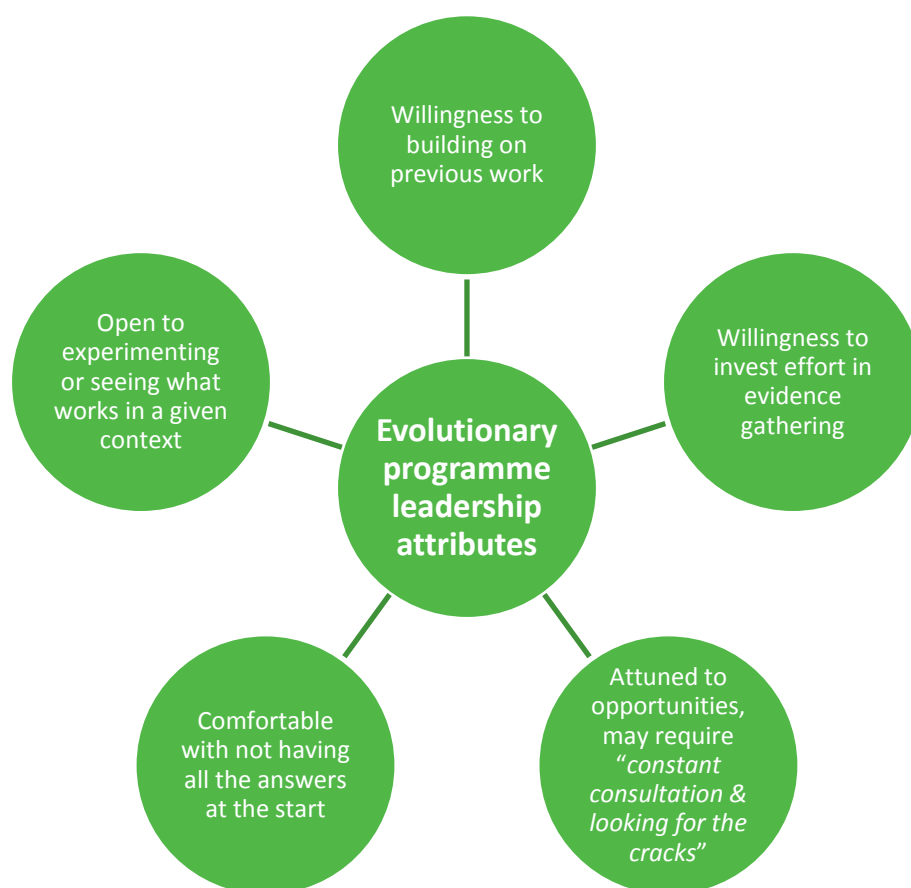


This evolutionary approach starts with being willing to build on progress made by previous projects, or finding the strengths in previous work and matching those with current opportunities so as to maximise development. An example of this would be when the new Tdh Delegate arrived in Albania near the end of TACT II he immediately started the concept note for TACT III. "By always being on the move and building on previous steps, it shows how far we can get" (Tdh Delegate).

Awareness of the value of evidence is an attribute with growing importance, especially given the current drive for effective evaluation. This attribute means recognising that time needs to be spent gathering and analysing data, sometimes in advance of programmes. Organisations can then be in a strong position to influence funders and policy makers, as well as being able to anticipate the effect of external influences, as far as is possible. Clearly, this attribute also operates at the level of reflective practitioners gathering evidence in relation to individual children.

Remaining attuned to opportunities requires ongoing communication with key stakeholders. In some cases, it could involve taking an alternative view in order to work around apparent barriers. For example, anti child trafficking was one of USAID's supported areas, but child protection was not. Yet TACT III was funded by USAID, as it was argued that improving child protection was a valuable part of addressing child trafficking. Indeed, the National Strategy on Combating Trafficking in Persons (2008-2010) endorses this as it specifically refers to how to address child protection via a National co-ordination

framework, specifically via Social Assistance Offices or Protection Units. This could be seen as the precursor to the CPSN project.

Finally, programme leaders and team members need to recognise that their team also needs to evolve. The design or make-up of a team is dependent on the needs of the project, which will change over time. For example, over the duration of Tdh's involvement in Albania, staffing has changed from many social workers and a few policy influencers to a few social workers, training staff and policy influencers, which reflects the shifts in focus discussed above. Thus, programme leaders also have to be able to sensitively handle staff recruitment and dismissal, as well as making decisions on effective staff development. In relation to the latter, Tdh has invested in staff training. This included engaging an international consultant, who used a cascade approach to training Tdh staff by coaching staff and then co-training with Tdh staff. This has both built internal capacity and set a model for developing sustainable local capacities.

## Key lessons

Across the lifetime of the TACT and CPSN projects, there have been shifts in focus. This has included moving from prevention of child trafficking and supporting victims to developing the child protection system; as well as moving from direct service provision to building capacity and provision by the State and local NGOs. This has required Tdh teams to apply an evolutionary or flexible approach. The following key lessons reflect this principle.

- Flexibility is required when engaging with Governments with few resources and some reluctance to recognise the issue at hand. This could include using an indirect approach or indirect labels, such as 'children of exile' when others (i.e. 'trafficked children') are not immediately acceptable.
- Retaining some flexibility in how the end goal is achieved can help to optimise opportunities.
- Child protection programmes operate in a changing context, and programme leaders need to be able to build on previous progress, while adapting to current opportunities. This evolutionary approach also means recognising the value of evidence (and the time needed to acquire it) and being open to experimentation or seeing what works in a given context.
- Programme teams also need to evolve, which requires careful and sensitive staff management.

What has been a key achievement of TACT or CPSN?

> *"It has been a far reaching experience, personally and professionally. Working as a team made it more fun, using each other's skills for the same purpose. I've also learned to communicate with different persons including Roma, NGO representatives and State representatives."* (Tdh staff member)

> *"Tdh is unusual in co-funding with Government services; others might say this is the Government's responsibility."* For example, *"Tdh has supported CPWs by providing working tools, such as the CP database (so there is a standard system for case management across CPUs) and computers, as CPWs receive no budgetary support, sometimes not even a desk."* (Tdh Staff members)

## 5.6    Valuing evidence

### 5.6.1    Evidence to inform and influence children at risk

As part of TACT, materials were created based on the witness of children themselves. Interviews with children, who had been trafficked to Greece, and those who had returned to Albania, were shown to older at risk children (from different areas to avoid identities being revealed). This helped to highlight the hardships and dispel myths about travelling to another country, i.e. that it would be an adventure, where they would make money to make life easier for their family. For younger children there was a comic strip that



Figure 8 Children discussing Dritani the robot. (Photo from Stoecklin & Tournecuillert, 2004, p. 37).

incorporated the stories of trafficked children and their families. When they were working on the streets of Greece, the children often referred to themselves as 'robots', powerfully capturing their depersonalising experience. Hence the creation of Dritani the robot featured in the comic, see Figure 8.

This kind of evidence was the focus for wider prevention discussions in schools, and also helped to 'sensitise' children to the situation of classmates who returned to school after being trafficked (Stoecklin & Tournecuillert, 2004).

### 5.6.2    Evidence to inform practice and policy

As highlighted in Figure 3, CPUs and the wider child protection system were developed through a process of experimentation, embedding and provision of on-going support. A key part of embedding was extending the reach or uptake of interventions. It was therefore "important to have successful case stories to convince other Municipalities of the value of CPUs and Multi-Disciplinary Groups" (INGO Representative). Evidence is thus needed for on the ground advocacy, but it can also be used to inform practice, for example, by incorporating case studies into guidance documentation (Koller, 2009; Spahiu & Lopari, 2012).

Clearly, Tdh have also incorporated practice evidence and experience into their own policy documentation, via the Thematic Policy on Enhancing Child Protection Systems (Feneyrol, 2011), see 4.3.1 Comparing central Tdh policy with practice in Albania. In terms of using evidence to inform Government policy development, the National State Agency has established an approach to monitoring. While this is still at an early stage, it does provide a future basis for using data to inform quality monitoring, inspections and policy development.

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### 5.6.3　Evidence for accountability and to convince funders

TACT II had included quarterly, multi-stakeholder meetings, and care was taken to make sure donors had access to monitoring data that provided concrete evidence of results. In some ways, the TACT programmes were "easy to monitor" because the focus was on 'how many' (Tdh Delegate). Thus, at the child level the programme could identify how many children had been accompanied or followed-up, and how many children the programme had helped to reintegrate into their communities. Equally, at the CPU level, it was clear that seven CPUs had been established, for which staff had been recruited jointly between Municipalities and Tdh, and after a transition period Municipalities paid for CPU staff. This ready access to evidence that matched or exceeded planned results, combined with positive findings from the USAID commissioned evaluation (Giantris, 2009) meant that donors were keen for TACT II & III to continue.

The focus of TACT III and CPSN changed in terms of intended outcome, but also in the need to be able to demonstrate sustainable impact. TACT III was thus more difficult to evaluate and "There was a compromise about 'visible' results" (Tdh Delegate) in that system development was less easy to directly evidence than the previous focus on 'how many'.

#### Key lessons

Having evidence of the need for an intervention is just as vital as being able to demonstrate any benefits of undertaking that intervention. Evidence can be used at a variety of levels, but it does take time and resource to collect and analyse, and requirements for rigorous impact evidence are likely to increase in future. Key lessons relating to evidence include the following.

- There is considerable value in allocating capacity to a) horizon scanning in order to anticipate and identify problem areas to "keep on observing new trends and new routes", and b) to investigate emerging problems and gather evidence. Having the evidence puts organisations in a strong position to influence funders and policy makers.
- Evidence is a valuable tool for convincing a range of stakeholders, from children to funders and from policy makers to practitioners. Ideally evidence should draw from stakeholders themselves, and include an appropriate mix of quantitative and qualitative data.
- Donors' or funders' expectations of projects are changing to a focus on sustainable impact. This means evaluation has to address more than just process questions (how well did the project do what it set out to do) but also what benefit has been derived from projects.

What has been a key achievement of TACT or CPSN?

> "Tdh was more advanced in case management. They had the expertise and were gathering evidence … We used the findings from research for advocacy at the EU level." (INGO Representative)

> "Looking back now, I can see that research is needed and Tdh projects would have benefited from having a research element alongside. If I had to start again, I would bring a university in." (Tdh Delegate)

# 6     A window into the future?

In a relatively short space of time, considerable progress has been made towards the creation of a comprehensive, national, child protection framework in Albania.

In this concluding section we summarise some of the messages that Tdh as an organisation, can draw from the report. This Institutional Learning Process or Capitalisation Study has been carried out by:

- reading situation reports, evaluations and other documentary and multi-media resources;
- consulting a wide range of stakeholders, including Tdh and other local and international NGO personnel, local professionals and community members; and
- analysing the reasons for the successes.

As an Institutional Learning report, we do not make specific recommendations for future work in Albania. We believe the report will be of value wherever government agencies and NGOs are engaged in developing child protection systems in low resource environments.

The Institutional Learning Process analyses the past and opens a window into the future - a 'possible' future for Tdh as it continues to make strategic interventions to strengthen child protection in Albania and elsewhere. Through the Institutional Learning Process we have identified a number of child protection system development principles, and associated key lessons. Some of these principles could equally apply in other development contexts. We conclude by identifying three organisational 'commitments' or stances that have informed Tdh strategy and practice throughout the period under review. These commitments have been repeatedly affirmed through interviews with services users and professionals. The authors believe they have been fundamental to Tdh operations in Albania and can inform future work.

Three powerful and effective organisational commitments:

1. Commitment to maintaining and sharing child protection practice expertise, allied to a community-empowerment vision among marginalised communities.
2. Commitment to multiple capacity-building collaborations including community collaborations, local NGO collaborations, INGO collaborations, and State (central and local) collaborations.
3. Commitment to a sustained but not static approach to Tdh projects and services that progressively build the capacity of local state and NGO stakeholders. Seeking to gradually move from direct-service provision to build the capacity of others; principally State and local government duty bearers in social services, education and public health.

The authors of this report consider that careful reflection on the past and lessons learned, and adherence to these three organisational commitments will make best use of Tdh resources and the continued development of the child protection system in Albania. This will thus ultimately support vulnerable families and protect children at risk of abuse, exploitation and neglect.

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# Appendix II – Interviewees, focus group and workshop participants

## Tdh Staff & Consultants

| Name | Role (Involvement in TACT &/or CPSN) | Participation |
|---|---|---|
| Vincent Tournecuillert | Head of mission Tdh Albania (until 2006) | Interview & Workshop |
| Mirela Shuteriqi | Worked on TACT & TACT II | Workshop |
| Thierry Agagliate | Head of mission Tdh Albania (2006 to 2009) | Interview & Workshop |
| Sendrine Constant | Head of mission Tdh Albania (Current) | Workshop & Interview |
| Edlira Bashmili | Case Manager, Tirana | Informal interview |
| Blerta Spahiu | Program Manager, Albania | Informal interview |
| Besa Brahja | Psychologist, Elbasan | Interview |
| Blerta Mano | Community Mediator, Elbasan | Interview |
| Stephanie Delaney | Consultant | Workshop |

## Albanian organisations

| Name | Role (Involvement in TACT &/or CPSN) | Participation |
|---|---|---|
| Heroina Duka | Institution Director, Durres | Interview |
| Boris Facia | School Director, Durres | Interview |
| | School psychologists, Durres | Group interview |
| Marsida | CPU worker, Tirana | |
| Nadire Kreka | CPU worker, Elbasan | Interview |
| Blendi Gremi | Head of Social Services, Qarku Elbasan | Interview |
| | Worker from CRU, Qarku Elbasan | Interview |
| Enver, Claudio, Ilir, Florian, & Adeli | CCG members at the Romani Sezi Daily Centre, Elbasan | Focus Group |
| Kela Lopari | Adviser to the Minister of Social Policies, Government of Albania | Interview |
| Miranda Pashaj | Director National State Agency for Child Protection | Interview |
| Denada Dibra | Director of Social Policies at MSWY | Interview |
| Irena Taga | Co-ordinator of Anti-Trafficking Unit | Interview |

## INGO or NGOs

| Name | Role (Involvement in TACT &/or CPSN) | Participation |
|---|---|---|
| Detlef Palm | UNICEF Country Representative | Interview |
| Agim Xhumari, Kathy Watanabe | Drejtor Ekzekutiv, Bethany Registered Nurse Bethany staff member | Group interview |
| Ridiona Stana | World Vision representative | Interview |
| Blerina Kashari | Director of Programme Implementation, Save the Children, Save the Children staff member | Group interview |
| Mikail Strerio | Director NPF, Elbasan | Interview |
| Zino Kore Ergerte Koroveshi | Director ARSIS & BKTF FBSH (Help for Children Foundation) representative | Group interview |

# Appendix III – Questions to interviewees and focus group members

This is the full range of questions, not all interviewees and focus group members were asked all questions.

## Background of stakeholders and their organisations
1.  Tell me about you (and your role with Tdh in Albania).
2.  What is the focus for your organization (in terms of child protection in Albania)?
3.  What kinds of activities does your organisation undertake?

## Detail of the TACT I, II & III and CPSN projects
4.  What role did you/your organisation have in the TACT and/or CPSN projects?
5.  How did the TACT I, II, III and/or CPSN projects get started?
    a.  How did they operate?
    b.  Who brought all the partners on board?
    c.  Who initiated projects?
    d.  Who planned projects?
    e.  How did the projects develop?
6.  Considering the transition between projects (e.g. from TACT II to III), were donors keen for projects to continue? And if so, why?

## Achievements, impact and lessons learned
7.  What were the key achievements of the project(s) that you were involved in?
8.  How sustainable were these achievements?
9.  What helped the project(s) to succeed?
10. Were there any issues or barriers?
11. How were these barriers overcome?
12. What advice would you give others looking to address child trafficking and/or child protection elsewhere?

## Establishment of CPUs and the Child Protection System
13. What is the role or function of a CPU in relation to other social work functions? Do all CPUs have specialist personnel?
14. Who is key in implementing a CPU in a municipality? Who is the local 'line manager' of a CPU?
15. What is the process of referral to a CPU?
16. Who else is involved in the decision making for vulnerable children?
17. Who does what to divert vulnerable children from institutions?
18. How would you describe the child protection system in Albania now? What aspects of that system existed before TACT and CPSN?

## The Albanian context
19. Were there any issues that are particular to Albania? (Prompt regarding potential issues related to specific community groups and/or the political context.)
20. Given the depth of poverty and social exclusion of Roma/Egyptian communities how is the child protection system functioning for them?
21. How was the 2010 law pushed forward?

## Partnership working
22. How were relevant politicians engaged?
23. How were community members approached and engaged with?
24. How did Tdh build trust and in-depth engagement with other INGOs and local NGOs?
25. There seems to be particularly strong partnerships amongst the NGOs and INGOs in Albania. Is this something unique to Albania? How did this spirit of partnership come about?
26. Can you tell me the story of a child you know whom your organisation has worked with?
27. Any other comments?