Save the Children

Children speak out

Trafficking Risk and Resilience in Southeast Europe

Montenegro report
May 2007

Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs

Oak Foundation

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Foreword

Save the Children's Child Trafficking Response Program (CTRP) is a 3 year project aimed at providing support to at-risk and trafficked children in South East Europe. The Programme includes Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, the UN administered province of Kosovo, Montenegro, Romania and Serbia. A comprehensive regional, child participatory and community-based research programme was started in March 2006 in order to learn more from children about what factors expose some of them to the risk of trafficking and exploitation, and what are children's own strengths and resiliencies in the adverse conditions many of them face.

This report presents children's own perception of their lives, in their families, with their peers and the wider community. It presents their fears as well as their hopes and dreams and gives valuable insight and understanding to anyone who is committed to improving children's lives, protecting them from abuse and exploitation and helping them fulfill their aspirations. The views of parents, teachers and other responsible adults are also presented for interesting comparison.

Many thanks to all the children and adults across the region who have participated in the research and made this report possible! We should re-pay them by increasing our efforts to minimize the risks many of them are faced with and help increase their resilience. Let us listen to children, take account of their views and include them in our efforts to achieve these goals!

Veslemoy Naerland
Programme Manager

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research was initiated for the purpose of more detailed understanding of the risk and resiliency of a specific group of children in Montenegro to trafficking. The research was based on action-participatory methodology, which focuses on understanding the conditions and way of living from the children's perspective. The guiding principle of the methodology was placing the children's perspective in the focus. This design of the methodology implied spending a lot of time in the comunities where the groups of children selected for the research lived. The techniques applied were the following: analysis of available reference materials, observation, unstructured and semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

The reference materials reviewed usually presented risks as separate and general, without any interaction among them (transition, poverty, family violence, age, gender, education etc). This research aimed to show, using the "ecological model", the interaction of the factors pertaining to different levels: macrolevel, interpersonal and individual level. Macrolevel refers to the way that political, institutional and economic factors, values and norms of the community and social marginalization influence children's lives and their perception of the risks and resiliencies generated at this level. Interpersonal level places special emphasis on family relationships, peer relationships, initmate partner relationships, relationships with staff, and relationships within immediate and wider social setting. Individual level puts special emphasis on the factors such as age, sex, characteristics and skills, education, decision-making, hopes and dreams. Children's responses were interpreted using the "ecological model"; they showed that different factors mentioned above that influence children's risk and resiliency to trafficking did not function independently, but in constant interplay.

The research focused on two groups - children from the RAE community of displaced persons from Kosovo and children without parental care living in an institution. It is very important to state that the available reference materials identify both groups as being at risk of trafficking. During the time spent in the communities and in intensive interaction with children, we tried to determine: their risks and resiliencies; the things they perceived as social support and protection; the dangers they faced in their respective comunities; the mechanisms and processes they identified as potentially putting them at risk; the decision-making process and the factors that influenced it; their expectations and their hopes for the future. We also tried to find out their opinion on how they could be supported in order to reduce the risks and strengthen their resiliency.

A wide range of responses were obtained related to different factors that influence children's lives and their decision-making. The responses obtained from children highlighted a number of important aspects and segments recognized by them as assistance and support in developing different abilities and skillls and empowering them to feel more resilient to different risks they face in their communities, including the risk of trafficking. The research showed the children's perspective and thus made it possible to truly learn about, hear, become aware of, and recognize children's thoughts and perceptions as important and helpful, in order to adequately address their needs and ambitions. If we aim to increase the quality of life of the vulnerable group of children in Montenegro and make it more empowering, we need to get to know them, ask them questions and listen to them, and only then, based on the results, design programs and activities intended for them.

INTRODUCTION

Save the Children Alliance is the world's largest independent organisation for children, creating a difference to children's lives through 28 member organisations in over 110 countries worldwide. Save the Children fights for children's rights and delivers immediate and lasting improvements to children's lives worldwide. From emergency relief to long-term development, Save the Children helps children to achieve a happy, healthy and secure childhood. Save the Children listens to children, involves children and ensures their views are taken into account. Save the Children's mission is to fight for the promotion, protection and fulfillment of children's rights. This means they work with and on behalf of children to make sure their rights are recognised and acted upon by international decision-makers, national politicians and local opinion formers. They are committed to persuading those with power and influence to create a better world for children, through policy and practice.

Save the Children has identified that the phenomenon of child trafficking represents a significant problem in today's world. A figure that is definitely striking is given in the United Nations statement that approximately 1.2 million children get sold for the purposes of labour or sexual exploitation globally. Considering the significance of this problem, in May 2002 Save the Children Alliance launched the ***Regional Child Trafficking Response Programme – CTRP*** in seven countries from the Southeast Europe region, including Montenegro. CTRP aimed to reduce the number of trafficked children from the communities exposed to risk and to enhance the mechanisms for protection of children at risk and child victims of trafficking. These aims were accomplished through relevant projects, capacity building and enhancement, advocating children's rights at national and regional levels.

Save the Children UK, one of the SC Alliance member organizations, has been working in Montenegro since 1994. Working with central and local government and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs), Save the Children prioritises its programmes to help the most vulnerable and disadvantaged children: children with disabilities; children from the Roma community; children deprived of parental care; children in conflict with the law and child victims of exploitation and abuse, such as trafficked children. SC activities include a combination of advocacy, research, support for partners – both from state institutions and local NGOs – as well as direct implementation of pilot projects.

The Save the Children CTRP programme on prevention and combating child trafficking in Montenegro focused on improving the measures for prevention of child trafficking by means of: strengthening child-rights based protection mechanisms for children at high risk of being trafficked in the country; improving the protection of trafficked children from exploitation by strengthening identification, referral and support mechanisms in the country; enhancing the protection and reducing the vulnerability of trafficked children by ensuring access to quality long-term support services after their experience of exploitation and trafficking. Save the Children works with governments and partners to prevent child trafficking, supporting those who are caught up in it, and tackling the root causes of poverty, economic instability and organised crime.

In partnership with the relevant ministries, Save the Children in Montenegro has developed several prevention models of effective community-based services to protect children at risk

and all teenage children. They were implemented through schools and social welfare institutions, directly involving more than 18,500 children aged 13-18. These models are replicable and already successfully integrated within national child protection and education system, national plans of action and adopted policies and strategies, which ensure their sustainability and scaling up. Direct work with these marginalised groups of children at risk has empowered them to develop necessary life skills and self-esteem, increased their visibility and reduced their isolation in the society, creating spaces and opportunities for their participation, socialization and better exercise of their rights. Save the Children targeted life skills training at vulnerable children who are at higher risk from trafficking, such as those living in refugee camps and Roma settlements, institutionalised children deprived of parental care and those from rural border areas. Save the Children has also shared the lessons learned and good practice from the Phase I of the CTRP Programme (2002-2004) in the report *Stealing the Childhood: Combating Child Trafficking in Montenegro*. This report presented also the results of the participatory action research that involved more than 5,000 children and dealt with their perceptions of and concerns about trafficking and the risks they faced. As a member of the National Board for Combating Trafficking and a working group on child trafficking, Save the Children strongly advocates for the rights of trafficked children and was involved in the development of the National Action Plan for Combating Child Trafficking. Save the Children is also working on building the capacity and increasing the sensitivity of the existing referral system in the country, especially that of social workers, NGO activists from SOS lines and shelters for victims of trafficking and other forms of abuse and exploitation, state prosecutors, judges doctors, teachers and police inspectors, enhancing their skills to adopt and implement child rights approach to their work with high-risk and trafficked children. Our ongoing awareness-raising campaign in the media advocates for smart and timely prevention. Through continuous training and support provided to the newly-established multidisciplinary community-based mechanisms – child protection networks in 5 towns, we have built links and enhanced cross-sectoral cooperation of social welfare, education, health, police, judiciary and NGOs for the provision of adequate response, coordination and implementation of child protection and prevention policies.

The direct and indirect impact of this programme so far can be seen mostly through changes in awareness, knowledge, capacity, practice, policy and legislation at local and national levels.

One of the main objectives of CTRP Phase Two (2006-2008) was reducing the vulnerability of children exposed to high risk of trafficking through preventative action. It was identified that, in order to develop adequate programmes, it was necessary to undertake research that would enable a more critical and in-depth understanding of risk and vulnerability, on the one hand, and children's resiliency to trafficking, on the other. The research aimed to contribute to finding out which groups of children were more likely to be trafficked than others. The starting point of this research was that, in order to develop a more critical understanding of the circumstances in which these children lived, their view of their own lives and reality must be given priority. It is only by accounting for their experiences and perceptions that we can develop more efficient interventions to protect these children and prevent the possible threat of trafficking.

The complex and multi-dimensional nature of child trafficking points to a need for a comprehensive approach to this problem; this can be efficiently explored if in-depth research is applied. The research is based on three formulated objectives, further specified

within research tasks. Research objectives and tasks are listed below and will be further explored in the section on methodology.

Research objectives:

1. **Define the method for identifying children, families and communities most at risk, and provide examples to illustrate what has been done and what remains to be done to prevent trafficking.**

Tasks:

� *Develop a comprehensive and coherent understanding of the complex structure of factors and their combined effect/impact at the level of the child, family, and wider community, that increase some children's vulnerability to trafficking while protecting some other;*

� *Realise which children, or groups of children, are more likely to be trafficked;*

� *Develop an understanding of the types of interpersonal relations and related roles and responsibilities that put children at risk;*

� *Explore the belief systems or social norms that support trafficking, with particular attention to group norms related to childhood, sex, ethnic background, sexuality and violence;*

� *Grasp the precise mechanisms according to which structural difficulties (such as the ones related to poverty, racism, inequality of sexes, conflict) may enhance the risk that a child will be trafficked.*

� *Determine whether general risk and resiliency factors may be identified in a certain number of contexts.*

2. **Grasp the processes and mechanisms of trafficking, including children's understanding of them, as well as why some children get trafficked and what gives protection to other children at risk.**

Tasks:

� *Clarify some of the processes and mechanisms that may serve to traffic a certain group of children;*

� *Define the relations among the agents directly or indirectly involved in the trafficking process (including traffickers, third parties, observers) and in what way certain socio-economic and cultural factors contribute to these relations;*

� *Enhance the understanding of the connection between the phenomenon of trafficking, migration and exploitation;*

� *Examine children's decision-making processes in the context of trafficking, especially the goals they have, the results they aim for and the efforts they make to achieve them;*

� *Find out how children see trafficking and what trafficking means for them;*

� *Assess whether child trafficking as seen and presented by policy-makers, practitioners and academics reflects the views expressed by the children themselves.*

3. Use this understanding, as well as the experience of Save the Children and partner organizations, to define and develop more efficient responses to trafficking.

Tasks:

�žel. *Enhance the knowledge of CTRP strengths and protection mechanisms among children themselves, in their families and communities;*

✾ *Develop an understanding of the need for support and protection from the perspective of children, their families and communities;*

✾ *Develop a comparative (baseline) assessment that may be used for monitoring and evaluation of future responses to trafficking;*

✾ *Develop specific pilot activities in the countries participating in the research using the research findings. Develop a better understanding of children's current needs, so as to enable more efficient measures of prevention and protection in local communities.*

We need to point out that a child's perspective on the world along with active involvement of children in the research process were at the core of this research, serving as primary tools for accomplishing the specified objectives and tasks.

RESEARCH TEAM

Regional level

The research possesses an added dimension and value, considering that the concept was developed at the regional level and included the following countries: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Kosovo, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and U.N. Administered Province of Kosovo.

The team in charge of conducting the anti-trafficking programme and this research at the regional level is presented below:

Graph 1
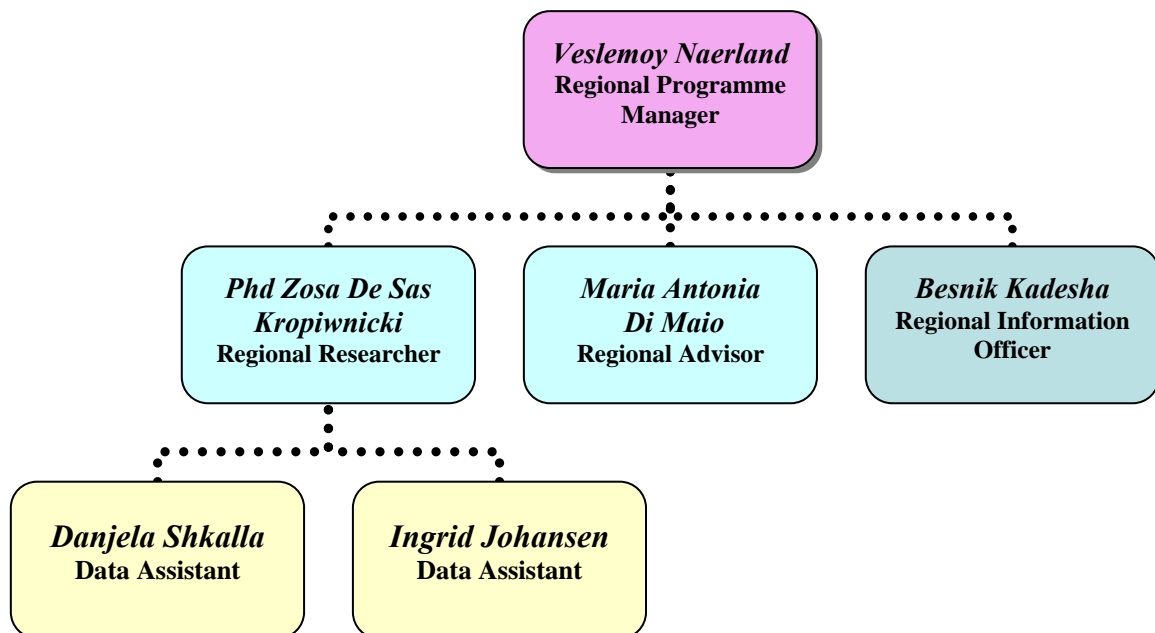
The regional team was responsible for the research at the regional level, including the regional publication. This team was responsible for monitoring the research progress, at both national and regional levels. They were in charge of designing the research project, training national researchers, organizing and conducting workshops for national teams, processing and analyzing the data at the regional level, conducting the research evaluation and designing an advocacy strategy.

A key role in this research belonged to the Regional Research Advisor, **Dr Zosa De Sas Kropiwnicki**, who provided educational, advisory and technical support to country teams in the course of the research. She designed the regional level Research Protocol (methods, tools and ethical guidelines), monitored research progress, and provided ongoing support and training on the research tools, formatting, analysis and report writing at the country level. In addition to that, she was assigned the tasks of processing, analyzing and interpreting the data at the regional level and developing the regional reports.

National level

Montenegro's research team consisted of:
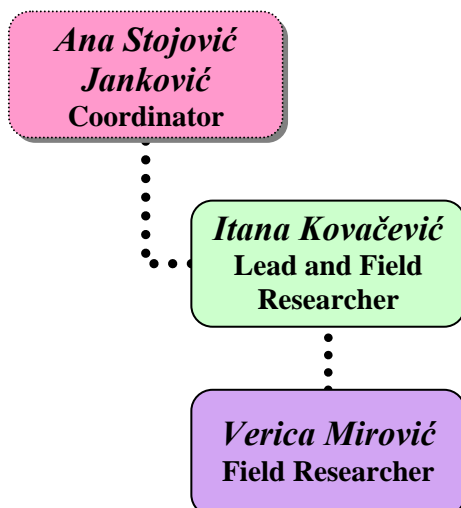
Ana Stojović-Janković is Save the Children UK Policy & Advocacy Manager in Montenegro Country Programme, directly managing the CTRP national programme for combating and preventing child trafficking in Montenegro. Within the research process, which was just one segment of the wide range of activities in this programme, she provided managerial and technical support in preparing, organization and implementation of the research, coordinating human, financial and other resources engaged internally and externally in this research process.

Itana Kovačević is a psychologist, working in "Luča" Private High School in Podgorica. She is experienced in providing psychosocial assistance and implementing preventative work with children. She has taken part in a number of national research projects, working on the analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. This was the first time she was involved in conducting an action-participatory research. Her roles and responsibilities in this research were: conducting an analysis of available reference materials on child trafficking in Montenegro; adapting the Research Protocol, methodology and tools to fit the Montenegrin context; undertaking field work for the purpose of data collection; monitoring the research process; communicating directly with the Regional Research Advisor; processing, analyzing and interpreting the obtained data; developing the national report.

Verica Mirović is a psychologist who has worked extensively at a shelter for victims of family violence. Until 2002, this shelter also served as a shelter for victims of trafficking, providing psychological counselling and advisory services. She participated in projects of psychosocial assistance for refugees and internally displaced persons from Kosovo (children and adults), including the RAE population. She has extensive experience in practical work with children and adults. This was the first time she participated in an action-participatory research involving children. Her roles and responsibilities within this research project were: performing fieldwork; processing, analyzing and interpreting the data obtained; developing the final national report.

ANALYSIS OF REFERENCE MATERIALS

About Montenegro

Montenegro is the youngest state in the Balkans – it obtained its independence at the referendum held on 21st May 2006, and was proclaimed as an internationally recognised independent state on 3rd June 2006.

Montenegro was the smallest of the republics that constituted the former Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. It is situated on the Mediterranean coast, has an area of 13,812 km² and a multi-ethnic and multi-religious population of approximately 650,000 (www.montenegro.yu). Since 1989, just like the rest of the former Yugoslav republics, Montenegro has experienced turmoil in all spheres. The process of gradual changes in the political, economic, and ethical systems began in the late '80ies, to continue and become more radical in the '90ies. They caused a decline in the quality with which the system function, that subsequently led to collapse. The dimension of these changes was accentuated by the long wars in the neighbouring countries, former Yugoslav republics, which resulted in a large number of refugees and displaced persons coming to Montenegro. The sanctions, bombardment, and protracted economic and social crises contributed to vulnerability and corruption at all levels of the system.

After the period of self-management socialism, with the state responsible for ensuring equality and meeting the basic needs of the overall population, most people were unable to manage in the new circumstances. The political elite established a new system, as well as new standards and rules that referred to all segments of life and work. Connections with the political elite implied privileges for a small group of people; the middle class became impoverished. **Financial status** was established as a major standard, a supreme ethical value.The rules that were established and the supreme importance of financial status divided the population into a small group of rich elite and a poor majority.

Following the resolution of the constitutional status, it is necessary to create the conditions for the development of a democratic society that should ensure efficient functioning of all the institutions of the system. This would provide the conditions for respect and protection of all human rights, including the protection of women's and children's rights. The reforms currently being implemented aim at accomplishing precisely such a society, and time and continuous monitoring of this process will show the actual dynamics of developing a democratic society in Montenegro.

Available research on this topic provides scarce data on Montenegro. The existing data comes from the research projects conducted at the level of the former State Union of Serbia *and* Montenegro. Such data could not provide a clear picture of specifics related exclusively to the situation in Montenegro, with regard to any issue or area. The research presented here is necessary and important so as to adequately monitor changes, assess needs, and define the situation and position of people in Montenegro. We believe that this research will contribute to better understanding of the position, needs and risks of particular groups of children, which should result in purposeful and adequate programmes and activities. Implementation of activities designed in such a way will lead to improvements in the lives of children at all levels and therefore a reduction of risks in relation to exploitation and/or trafficking.

The position of the child in Montenegro

The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, ratified by Montenegro, defines a child as follows:

"A child means every human being below the age of eighteen years."

(Vučković-Šahović, 1999, p. 20)

Together with the competent governmental and non-governmental institutions, the Government of Montenegro initiated the development of the *National Action Plan for Children for the Period 2004 - 2010* (2004). The vision of the *Action Plan* is that children in Montenegro become productive and active participants in all aspects of our society. Raising the issue of the child and the position of the child represents in itself the first step in essential treatment of children. The *Action Plan* indicates the ways to contribute to a world fit for children, through its clear strategic goals:

> *1. All children are entitled to protection against inequality.*
>
> *2. All girls and boys have the right and access to quality education.*
>
> *3. Ensure healthy life for girls and boys.*
>
> *4. Protect the environment for children.*
>
> *5. All children are entitled to full citizenship of Montenegro.*

The activities described, the agents responsible and the method of monitoring the results should provide a comprehensive picture of the position of the child and, within the timeline defined, ensure that the rights of every child are recognised, acknowledged and exercised in the Montenegrin society (*National Action Plan for Children 2004-2010*, 2004).

In the current Constitution of Montenegro, a child is considered as a separate person and granted the right to use his/her mother tongue (Article 9), the freedom of profession of religion (Article 11), the right to social and health insurance (Articles 55-57), and the right not to be abused (Article 62) (The Constitution of Montenegro, 1992).

It is legally defined that a person becomes of age at 18, when they are granted all the rights and responsibilities of an adult person. Existing statistical reviews, however, most frequently do not comply with this definition, as they include children and define the age limit depending on the issue being considered: in May 2006, for example, the official statistics defined children as being between 10 and 19 years of age, while sometimes children are defined as below 24 or 25 years of age (Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, 2005). In order to enable monitoring of the situation and the exercise of children's rights, precise terms need to be used in statistics and formal documents, since this is the data that provides the basis for any further qualitative differentiations, discussions and critical reviews of the concept of childhood.

The position of the child in Montenegro may be observed both from the perspective of a social construction and the child's position in the family. The prevailing system of family and

other values in Montenegro is a patriarchal one, fostering the child's dependency on the parents, with parents directing and defining to a large extent the way a child lives. Parents see children as the meaning and measure of worth of their own lives, at the same time treating them as their own property (Kovačević, 2004). This sustains the construction of family as the fundamental, most important and most valuable unit in the society. When considering children's problems, risks, resiliencies and successes, their roots are usually searched for in family functioning and dynamics. This, on the one hand, denies the child's individuality and opportunity to make autonomous decisions, but, on the other hand, completely excludes the influence of the existing social system, the way it functions and the norms that prevail in it. If we take as a starting point the existing construction of the child, where the child is highly valued and risks and resiliencies are identified within the family, then we are faced with the dilemma where to locate and search for explanations for children without parental care.

Taking into account the evident need and necessity for precise terms in statistics and formal documents, this definition does not communicate the way that children or adults in Montenegro describe and assess childhood, regardless of the institutional and formal definitions. This raises the issue of the extent to which it is possible to accept a universal conception of childhood without obtaining prior understanding the meaning it has in the given community. In grasping the conception of childhood in a specific group, it is necessary to consider the circumstances and environment that children develop in, as well as the different roles and responsibilities they have in their relations with others. This research treats a child as a unique person with multiple abilities (i.e. capacities and gifts) developed in the child's environment in relation to key actors, interpersonal relationships and social norms.

This research promotes the multi-dimensional nature of the conception and notion of childhood, as well as its relative nature when considering specific communities. In that sense, it enables work on raising the awareness about the conception of childhood and subsequent application of more efficient interventions that would be based on the living conditions and the context in which children live.

Trafficking

Trafficking in is a serious form of human rights violation and "a form of highly profitable organized crime". According to UN data, the profit derived from trafficking in persons amounts up to 7 billion USD per year (Raymond, 2005).

Trafficking is defined in the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, as:

The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation (Palermo Protocol, 2000).
Definitions, such as this one from the Palermo Protocol, emphasise three components in understanding the phenomenon of trafficking in persons:

⇨ The process that precedes trafficking: recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt;

⇨ The means to control the victims: threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, blackmailing, deception, abduction, abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, giving or receiving of payments or benefits to obtain the consent of a person controlling other persons;

⇨ Form of exploitation: exploitation for prostitution or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, subordination or organ extraction (UNHCR, 2006).

According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, the term 'child trafficking' refers to trafficking in persons below the age of eighteen (Palermo Protocol, 2000).

In Montenegro, trafficking is most frequently associated with sex trafficking, which is the trade in persons for the purpose of **commercial sexual exploitation. However,** other methods of exploitation of children include **various forms of forced labour, begging, house work, petty crime, illegal adoption, pornography, marriage, military** operations, **organ selling and other illegal activities that present a risk to children's health and life (IPU/UNICEF, 2005).**

A child victim of trafficking is entitled to double protection, as a child and a victim of exploitation, since all children possess special psychological and physical characteristics and special rights guaranteed to them. Child trafficking is considered as the gravest form of violation of children's human rights, because child victims of trafficking are deprived of the right to life and development, the right to be protected from exploitation and sexual exploitation, the right to freedom without violence and discrimination, the right to live with their own families, as well as the right to quality education (Žegarac, 2005).

Child trafficking represents the worst form of exploitation of children and is a violation of children's rights. Therefore, key individuals and institutions must realise that their timely and adequate response to child victims and potential victims of trafficking is necessary.

Montenegro and trafficking

This section will present a brief history of the incidence of trafficking and the manner in which it is understood and dealt with in Montenegro. Before 1999, trafficking was identified by local NGOs concerned with the status and protection of women's rights, while state institutions denied its incidence, hiding behind the statements that registered only the illegal migration of women and children who came from abroad voluntarily to work in Montenegro. At the time, there was no clear understanding of the problem on the part of the authorities and, therefore, neither attitude nor policy concerning trafficking. Local NGOs took over the crucial work of raising public awareness and assisting victims directly (*Safe Women's House* and *Montenegrin Women's Lobby)*, with the support of international organizations and agencies (Derly, 2003).

At this time, local NGOs (*Safe Women's House* and *Montenegrin Women's Lobby*) who encountered actual victims of trafficking, tried to provide them with the best possible protection, alleviate additional victimization and inform the public about this phenomenon. Their pioneer work with the victims made them realise the necessity to cooperate with state institutions for the purpose of complete and adequate assistance to victims of trafficking (Podumljak, 2004). International organizations were aware of the problems faced by these NGOs in their work with the victims, as well as the insufficient support provided by the state, and made some steps. During 2000, OSCE, ODHIR and IOM assumed leadership and established the basis for the implementation of activities to fight trafficking in Montenegro. It was only then that the Government of Montenegro appointed the National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking. Close cooperation was established between different agencies, services and local authorities in the subsequent period. It resulted in the creation of a project committee, for the purpose of a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary approach to fighting trafficking, as well as development and implementation of programmes for the protection of victims. The committee included: the National Coordinator for the Fight Against Trafficking, National Coordinator for the Equality of Sexes, local NGOs: *Safe Women's House* and *Montenegrin Women's Lobby*, UNICEF, IOM, ICMC and OSCE-ODIHR (UNICEF, 2005).

This resulted in improved identification of victims at all levels, setting up local police teams and joint activities, and a Memorandum on Cooperation with local NGOs. It is necessary to underline that international organizations requested the Government of Montenegro to provide all the necessary mechanisms to fight trafficking and protect the victims. Faced with such requests, the Government of Montenegro, parallelly with the development of local police teams, initiated a modification of regulations. In 2002, trafficking was introduced in the Criminal Code as a criminal act, in Articles 444, 4445, and 446 of the Criminal Code, presented in Appendix 1 (Medenica, 2004). That same year, Save the Children raised the issue of child trafficking in Montenegro, and together with other entities concerned with this matter, initiated the development of the National Action Plan for Fighting Child Trafficking. This initiative resulted in the Draft Strategy for Fighting Child Trafficking, which clearly outlined the goals, roles, responsibilities and activities of all relevant agents (Strategy for Fighting Child Trafficking in Montenegro, 2004).

In spite of the existence of clear strategies and interventions for fighting trafficking, there are no official statistics on the number of victims in Montenegro. Available data was obtained from internal statistics and reports of local NGOs dealing with victims of trafficking, and the conclusions concerning the characteristics of victims are based on the statements of a small number of victims from Montenegro. As a result, this information does not give a clear picture of the nature of trafficking in the Montenegrin context. The official reports in Montenegro state that it is a transit country when it comes to trafficking.

Statistics

The statistics of the NGO Montenegrin Women's Lobby includes the victims' sex (men/women), age (newborns, children aged 1-8 years) and underage girls (aged 13-18 years) and their country of origin (NGO Report, 2006).

Table 1

	16. 3. – 31. 12. 2004	1.1. - 26. 10. 2005
Women	4	11
Underage girls (13-17 years)	1	7
Children (1-8 years)	0	4
Newborns	1	0
Men	4	4
Total	10	26

Graph 1
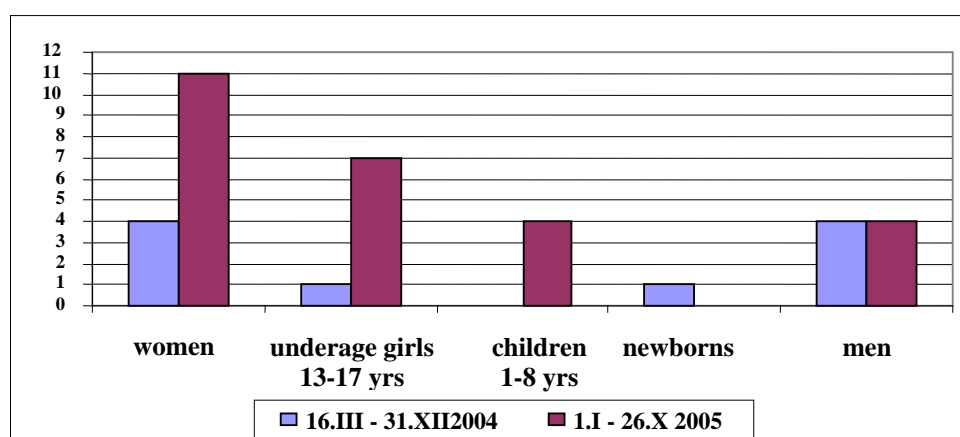
Table number 2 shows the number of victims that were placed in the shelter ran by the NGO Montenegrin Women's Lobby, by their country of origin.

Table 2

Country of origin	16.3. - 31.12.2004	1.1 - 26.10.2005
Ukraine	5	0
Serbia	3	10
Albania	1	0
Lithuania	1	0
Montenegro	0	3
Romania	0	6
Bangladesh	0	4
Republic of Srpska	0	2
China	0	1
Total	10	26

Graph 2
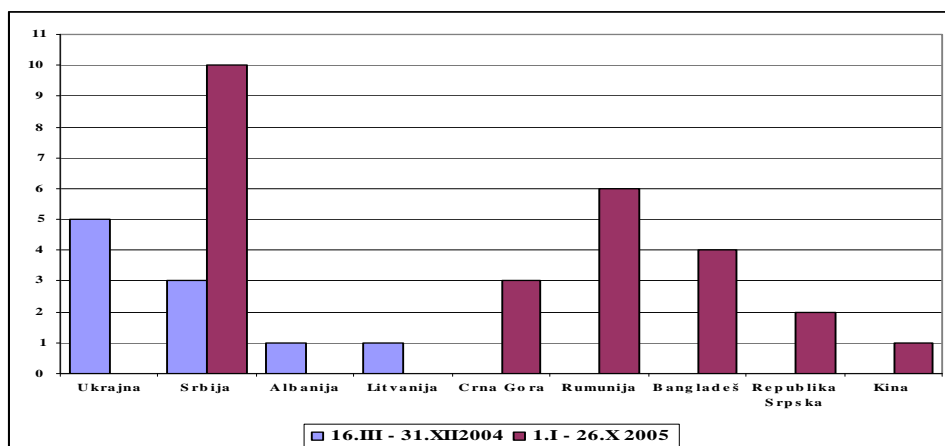
The statistics derived from the NGO Safe Women's House suggests that 58 victims were placed in their shelter between 2001 and 2005 and that 21 of them were underage. Information on the nationality of underage victims (Raičević, 2006, str.25) is given in the table below:

Table 3

Country of origin	2001 – 2006
Moldova	6
Ukraine	2
Romania	3
Serbia	4
Montenegro	2
Belarus	1
Croatia	1
Russia	1
Roma	1
Total	21

According to the IOM report, local shelters provided assistance to 35 victims of trafficking, 30% of whom were underage. Analysis of recent statistics shows a mild increase in the number of underage victims. They consider an important finding that most of the identified victims come from families where domestic violence, alcoholism or other problems are present. So far, there have been four underage victims of trafficking from Montenegro - three of them victims of internal trade, while one was identified in Albania by the IOM office in that country. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) reported three cases from Nikšić and Bijelo Polje where child trafficking was suspected, but not confirmed as yet (IOM, 2005).

The National Coordinator for the Fight against Trafficking stated in the media the official position that trafficking did not exist in Montenegro as organised crime, but only individual and random cases.

The statistics given above show an inconsistency that is most frequently explained by differing interpretations and understandings of the notion of trafficking victim. Efforts are being made in Montenegro to define this notion clearly and precisely, and to create the conditions for systematic and continuous monitoring and statistics on this phenomenon.

It is evident that a very small number of victims have Montenegro as their country of origin. At a first glance, this does not provide data that would serve as a basis for a more thorough analysis of risk and resiliency factors. However, if we consider the factors stated in the references as trafficking risks, we realise that the majority of children in Montenegro experience some of these risks. This provides an argument in favour of this type of research, both in its contents and its essence, being well-timed for Montenegro.

Factors related to the risk of trafficking

Research on trafficking most frequently highlights the factors related to trafficking and the vulnerability of certain groups of children, women, and men to this phenomenon. In the available reference materials "risks" are defined as certain aspects of children's lives that influence the vulnerability of certain children to trafficking. Risks are usually presented in a general way, thus neglecting the fact that risks are specific for each individual person in a particular social context.

For the purpose of this research, the "risk factors" identified in the references will be presented within an ecological framework. This approach shows that individual behaviour is influenced by multiple factors at multiple levels. The key feature of this model is that risk and resiliency factors are not independent, but constantly interact with each other, thereby influencing individual behaviour.

The ecological model includes three levels:

- *Macro level, which includes the socio-cultural and economic context*: political and economic situation, institutional and legislative framework, values and norms.

- *Interpersonal level, or the level of relationships*: family, peers, immediate and broader social network.

- *Individual level*: sex, age, knowledge, skills, attitudes, temperament, appearance.

Individual level

Interpersonal level

Macro-level (socio-cultural and economic context)
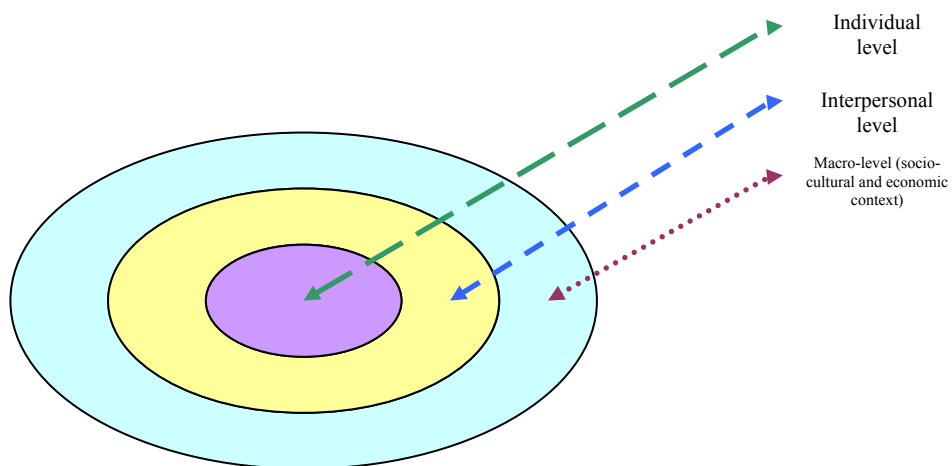
The "risks" identified in the available references will be analyzed in relation to the levels described. We will present the way that the factors related to groups of children at risk were categorised, generalised and linked within the reference materials on child trafficking in Montenegro. In addition, analysis of available references will serve to indicate what we believe to be important gaps that prevent us from getting a comprehensive picture of risk and resiliency. This approach will provide not only more detailed information about risk, but also highlight the resiliency of children living in some communities in Montenegro.

MACRO LEVEL

Political and economic framework

The territory of former Yugoslavia, including Montenegro, has undergone very complex changes that influenced all segments of life and work of each individual citizen. The collapse of the earlier system led to a long period of crisis. This, together with wars in the neighbouring countries, resulted in a large number of refugees and displaced persons, sanctions, economic crisis, lengthy transition and privatization. All of these changes have had impact on the vulnerability and strengths of people, and especially children. Below, we will show to what extent the available references link these events with the issue of child trafficking.

After the collapse of the old, safe self-management socialist system of thought, work, and interpersonal relations, people found themselves faced with an overall uncertainty that generated chaos. The things that used to be of critical importance no longer mattered; many beliefs and convictions collapsed. On the other hand, wars in the neighbouring countries brought about the emphasis on the differences (political, religious, national, economic) that fostered a feeling of insecurity and uncertainty. In Montenegro, the economic crisis, aggravated by other circumstances, resulted in widespread poverty. People found various ways to secure a basic existence, resulting in increased crime and gray economy (illegal small-scale trade). The state system and norms no longer functioned, and individuals were left to take care of their basic needs and comply with the new value system. This situation forced

many to enter risky and illegal activities in order to secure their survival. The public and the society did not condemn this, but justified it using the fact that, given the absence of alternative options, this was the only way people could meet their basic existential needs. At the same time, there were no clear legal restrictions or control. Montenegro was open to any illegal or criminal activity, which probably included trafficking in persons and children. It is during this period that significant socio-economic inequalities became apparent. Some elite groups acquired large amounts of capital over a short period of time, while the majority of the population struggled to survive by engaging in small-scale fraudulent operations (Bešić, 2006)

Children currently falling under the UN definition of childhood (below 18 years of age) have lived in unstable, turbulent political, economic and social circumstances in Montenegro. Such unstable political and economic system caused inefficient work of certain state authorities and institutions concerned with children. Social and health services, education, police and judiciary were unprepared for the new developments and therefore unable to provide adequate care. Family, a highly valued system in Montenegro, was threatened. Family conveyed the existing system to children, whose identity was shaped, at the individual level, by this context (Popović-Gavranović, 2005).

The available references do not explicitly show how and which aspects of children's lives were influenced by these political and economic changes and the manner in which they may enhance the likelihood that a child will be trafficked. Generations of children have experienced the circumstances described above and political and economic crises that did not foster a sound value hierarchy or promise personal safety and self-realization. Financial grounds and values underpinned the identification model offered to children and youth in Montenegro, so that making "fast and easy money" became their primary goal. Children whose parents struggled to survive, offered the model of getting rich fast, received an ambiguous message and lived in chaos and confusion from which they derived their own messages that made them more or less vulnerable to risk. References do not provide information about why some children are not trafficked and how this is related to the resiliency mechanisms they have developed in this context. This research places emphasis on identification and clarification of the circumstances, conditions and aspects that influence the development of resiliency factors.

Poverty

The current period, marked by the privatization process, has brought about economic recession, poor quality and more expensive health and social care, as well as a number of other negative side effects. The rate of unemployment has declined for the first time in a considerable period of time. On the other hand, the continued trend of impoverishment, especially among the vulnerable groups, still remains a serious problem. To conclude with, although indicators differ, it is evident that this reduction in the rate of unemployment has not considerably improved the economic position of family and its members at the broader community level (Bukvić et al, 2005).

Therefore, references highlighted poverty as one of the risks related to child trafficking in Montenegro. The statistics available show 30.4% of Montenegrin population is economically

threatened, while the spending and expenses of 33.7% of population are under the absolute poverty line (Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, 2003).

The issue of the indicators in assessing poverty levels is raised, while the issue of individual perception of one's own economic status is disregarded.

Poverty in Montenegro is related to the rate of unemployment, which has been on the decline since 2000. If we consider the rates of unemployment by regions, the northern region is considered to be poorer than the central and southern ones. According to official data, survey of the labour market by municipalities shows low participation of workforce, below 50%. Namely, 66.7% of the overall population is capable of working, while only about two fifths out of that percentage are actually active on the labour market - either employed or looking for work (43.8%) (Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, 2005).

The statistics on the structure of unemployed people for December 2004 show the largest share of people with secondary education (three-year or four-year), followed by those with incomplete secondary education and those with elementary education. Graph 5 shows the employment rate by levels of education (Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, 2005, p. 6).

Graph 5[1]
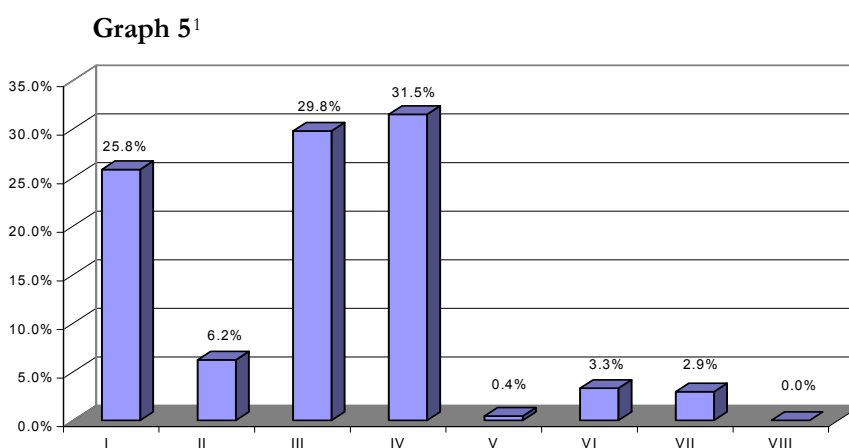
This employment scheme may be brought into connection with the impact of level of education on children's vulnerability to trafficking, considering that level of education is connected with employability. However, family poverty results in fewer opportunities for children to acquire education and various skills.

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[1] Key:
Level I – elementary school
Level II – elementary school + training
Level III – secondary school, incomplete, 2-3 years
Level IV – secondary school, 3-4 years
Level V– secondary school plus training (highly skilled worker)
Level VI – college education
Level VII – university and master's degree
Level VIII – doctoral degree

References state that poverty may often lead to work exploitation by the family itself, for the purpose of survival. Sometimes families send children to work, which may expose them to further risks, including the risk of being abused and trafficked (Žegarac, 2005).

This data indicates the necessity to conduct research on groups of children living in poverty-stricken contexts – their perception of their own position and the extent to which they as individuals or as members of a collective family employ functional and/or dysfunctional mechanisms to cope with poverty. We realise that, for some children, poverty was not a factor that made them engage in risky activities, while for others it was the factor that motivated their decision to do so. This research encompasses a group of children who are provided basic financial security within an institution for children without parental care. One of the questions raised in this research is to what extent they assess their own opportunities and alternatives in relation to their awareness of their socio-economic position. When poverty as risk factor is questioned in this way, it is very difficult to tackle the specific needs and protection of at risk children. It is necessary to address and analyze the impact of poverty from children's perspective of the circumstances in which they live and the opportunities they have available.

Cultural and social norms

The social and cultural norms in Montenegro are generated by the patriarchal system. Patriarchy is the form of social organization that rests upon the authority of the father. This implies an authoritarian structure that relies on social and legal dependency of women and children. In this system, the male line determines origin and inheritance. Patriarchy is most often considered as the "natural" situation, rather than a product and result of a specific culture (Kovačević, 2004).

The spirit of patriarchal values is evident in the socialization process. Different messages are sent to boys and girls in the course of their upbringing, and they are expected to manifest different forms of behaviour. As they progress towards maturity, boys and girls receive different incentives and directions. Boys and girls, their characteristics and successes, are assessed and judged differently. Certain forms of behaviour that are considered acceptable for men are condemned and severely punished by the community, when practiced by girls. Boys are encouraged to be active and take on new experiences, while girls are encouraged to be passive and naïve, lack knowledge and experiences. Such upbringing favours and brings about the subordinate position, loyalty and obedience on the part of women (girls).
Thus, from early childhood onwards, if a person acts in a manner that counters the already determined and acceptable form of behaviour, they will be punished first by their parents, then their teachers and their peer group. In time, children begin to judge and punish those who break the established scheme of socially constructioned and desirable gender roles and tasks. This principle enables society to maintain the existing system of gender inequality in both private and public spheres (Mlađenović, 1995, pp. 11-14)

These norms enhance the vulnerability of girls, and increase the chance that they will make the wrong decisions. Due to insufficient social experience, girls do not have the opportunity to test their own strengths, capacities and ability to manage new situations. Various gender-related restrictions have reduced the opportunity for many girls to develop skills and access important information or education. For this reason, references use lack of education and/or

information to explain why girls are more at risk than boys. While this may be true, existing studies often fail to connect this to the construction of gender in a predominantly patriarchal system of values and roles (Raičević, 2006). Furthermore, the role assigned to boys and men is not questioned as risky and the predominant role assigned to boys in this is context is to provide for and protect women and children. No question is raised as to the extent to which such position puts boys at risk of labour exploitation for example.

Interpersonal level

Family, as the core unit of the society, represents the support and safety system for the child. All the developments at the macro level in Montenegro have had direct influence on the functioning of family and its members. If taking into account only the internal family functioning, family violence between the spouses, abuse or neglect by parents are identified as risk factors and possible "triggers" that send the child on a search for better life.

Many reports link trafficking in women and children with a lack of interest on the part of the society to face the violence it contains. Violence against women and children is a widespread phenomenon despite the guaranteed individual rights and freedoms in numerous international documents and constitutions. In patriarchal societies, violence is not limited to families, but is present in the spheres of economy, education and public life, creating a circle that is difficult to break without undertaking action at all levels of the system (Đorđević et al, 2004).

Within the norms and the existing patriarchal upbringing, family violence is often tolerated in Montenegro. The survey "Family Violence" by J. Radulović (2003) states that corporal punishment is accepted in Montenegro as a basic and efficient form of instruction. In addition, it states that 47.1% of women consider it is understandable that parents hit their children if they do something wrong, 10.9% are not sure, and 42 % disagree with this statement. The question that arises is to what extent children see this method of instruction as productive and how it influences their assessment of risk and resiliency.

Victims of trafficking from Montenegro who were placed in the shelter were also victims of family violence. This information does not enable us to conclude that family violence is one of the key risks for trafficking, given the fact that not all child victims of family violence get trafficked (Raičević, 2006).

Family violence, including violence between spouses, and especially physical and sexual abuse of children, are often the reasons why children leave such environment and expose themselves to increased risk of trafficking (Žegarac, 2005).

The influence of peers on risk and resiliency was not included in the available literature as either risk or resiliency factor. This is particularly important among adolescents, who according to the childhood development literature are likely to adopt the norms and rules of the peer group. It is held that peers have a significant influence on children, especially adolescents and the decisions they make. As a result, this research placed particular emphasis on exploring the influence of peers as a risk and/or resiliency factor in child trafficking.

INDIVIDUAL LEVEL

Age

Age is mentioned as an important factor in relation to varying degrees of vulnerability to trafficking and likelihood of entering any risk (Tutnjević – Gordman, 2004). Results of the latest research conducted in the territory of Serbia and Montenegro show that adolescent girls aged 16-18 are most at risk from trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, while the 11-16 age group is connected with child trafficking for the purpose of begging. The data refers to victims of trafficking either located or coming from Serbia and Montenegro (Žegarac, 2005).

It is believed that abilities, skills and capacities vary with age, with regard to both risk and resiliency. It is said that children below the age of 12 are unable to make adequate assessment of the dangers pertaining to a certain situation and largely rely on adults for guidance, which may represent a risk. The ones over the age of 12 and entering adolescence assume the freedom of choice and making decisions concerning their own future, and often do not place themselves in the category of children. This introduces the risk of making independent choices without consulting adults. This needs to be linked with the cultural perception of the child and adolescent in our society, which assigns them an *a priori* dependent position. Their thoughts and views are usually discredited by adults, additionally motivating them to make risky choices (Tutnjević-Gordman, 2004).

It is necessary to point out that the measures and mechanisms of working with children in our country are not adjusted to the special developmental needs of adolescents. Hence, it was necessary to place emphasis on this age group in order to contribute our understanding of their needs and their perception of the world.

Sex

More women than men, and more girls than boys are involved in the trafficking process. In Montenegro, as a country whose social and cultural norms and values are shaped by the patriarchal system, there is a popular saying that 'a female child is another's treat'. Such traditional conception of woman is conveyed by the education, media and legislation. This particular saying indicates also that the family invests less in female children. Girls are provided less education than men, which makes them accept jobs that are less paid, and indirectly puts them in a dependent position in relation to men. Getting out of this position is given as explanation for choosing risky alternatives with the aim to achieve independent life and success (Dabižinović, 2005).

On the other hand, the risk of trafficking for boys is not considered. Despite the fact that trafficked boys do not appear often in statistics, we cannot deny that there have been some such cases, particularly in relation to trafficking for forced labour and begging. For this reason, we thought it necessary to include in this research both sexes and their perceptions of reality.

Education

References usually list education as a resiliency factor. It is considered that a more educated individual is better informed, and therefore has a wider range of opportunities, alternatives and choices, and a better assessment of his/her own position and the position available under certain terms (Tutnjević Gorman, 2004).

Different levels of education imply different chances to get employment. The breakdown of the unemployment rate by levels of education is shown in Graph 5 on page 12 (Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, 2005). Education seen in this manner can be indirectly connected with the chance of finding employment, which is in turn closely connected with the ability to survive. The uncertainty associated with poverty, as well as lack of opportunity for young people to find employment in Montenegro may serve as one of the triggers of children's search for a better and more certain future somewhere else.

The study mentioned above indicates that children living in economic and social poverty show a tendency to abandon further schooling and start working to support their family. The work they get is often inadequate and involves exploitation, due to low level of education. (UNICEF/Centre for Development of NGOs-CRNVO, 2003).

This presentation of data raises the dilemma whether schooling was discontinued after the children were trafficked or whether they had decided to discontinue it before they received an offer. For this reason we devoted special attention to children's hopes and dreams and how they seek to achieve them, in order to be able to clarify this mechanism.

According to the latest data, the rate of enrolment in secondary schools is high in Montenegro, but is still not satisfactory. This is related to the fact that not all individuals belonging to this age group are enrolled, such as children from the Roma or Montenegrin population in smaller communities. This data is most frequently minimised and neglected because attention is directed to national statistics, which show the situation in the whole of Montenegro and not smaller communities (Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses, 2005).

In the upcoming transition period, many children have lost their motivation to study. Education is no longer perceived as a source of resiliency and a road to a better life. Faced with the lack of motivation among the youth, Montenegro has undertaken a comprehensive education reform.

Decision-making

A person makes decisions that concern his/her behaviour, activities and life. In the light of developmental psychology recognition of different levels of cognitive development, the question arises as to the extent to which a child, whose cognitive and intellectual capacities are still not fully developed, is able to make decisions. Children are generally placed in a dependent position, with adults making decisions on his/her behalf.

We agree with these main premises of developmental psychology. However, we cannot agree that children do not make certain judgments and decisions, under certain circumstances and in the

framework of relationships and living conditions, even though their decisions may be influenced by adults and the society. This research focuses on children's role in decision-making in relation to other actors in a particular social context.

One of the reasons that the references often mention in relation to trafficking is the desire of children, young people, or their parents to look for a better life in another environment. The economic crisis and other developments in Montenegro have led many people to emigrate to Western countries. Modern media inspire people's expectations of better life in a different environment, especially in Western countries. Frequent migrations in the past and the stories of migrants upon their return confirm this image of the West as a chance for earning more money and securing a better and safer life. These perceptions are used and abused by traffickers, who use the media and other channels to place advertisements inviting young people to find jobs abroad that do not require previous experience or qualifications (Žegarac, 2005). The question arises whether children consider these options and imagine their lives outside the country, and how this affects their decision-making and vulnerability to trafficking-related risks.

Groups of children selected for the research

Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians (RAE)–internally displaced persons (IDPs) from Kosovo

The Roma population is one of the most marginalised social groups in Montenegro. Academics, practitioners and members of the wider public tend to include Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians under the term Roma population, without recognizing or acknowledging the differences and specific features of each of these groups. These three groups belong to the poorest segment of the Montenegrin population and possess a comparatively poor educational and professional level; for the most part they do not possess elementary education or specific vocational training. Research shows that most of them wish to work, but in most cases are unable to secure any type of work and thereby improve their own living conditions. This creates the circle of lack of education-unemployment-poverty, which is impossible to break without active support and help from all actors in the society (Radević D, 2003).

According to the 2003 census, there are 2,601 people of RAE nationality living in Montenegro, but in reality this figure is between 20, 000 and 27,000. A considerable number of RAE do not have personal identification papers, and therefore do not appear in the official statistics. This makes it difficult to monitor and record the number of children who migrate and/or are trafficked. Not knowing the precise number of children makes it more difficult to conduct research on this topic or implement any programmes to prevent risky behaviour and trafficking, because it makes it difficult to monitor the effects of existing programmes (Radević D, 2003).

More than 60% of RAE households are on the verge of economic survival. 15-20% of families have no income at all. The main source of income for most of the families that do

have some income is working in the public and private sector, followed by various seasonal jobs, social care, and begging, while the smallest percentage is generated from small-scale trade and resale. Access to education represents another problem and risk related to children from RAE communities. Latest research shows that 87% of the Roma population is illiterate. There is a tendency among this population not to attend school for long; however, this does not authomatically mean that lack of education is a risk factor for this population (Delija F. et al, 2005).

The RAE population in Montenegro inhabits settlements on the outskirts of towns and many members of these communities are subject to prejudice on the part of the majority. Existing research listed as a most widespread prejudice and insult that Roma are lazy, which is why they beg, and they are also dirty and stupid. (Delija F. et al, 2005). This population is also victim of discrimination related to space, economy, education, and health, which may pose considerable risks for children from this population (UNICEF/CRNVO, 2003).

Although there is no relevant data on trafficking for the RAE population and their children, the study *"Trafficking in Persons in Serbia"* shows that they perceive themselves to be at great risk of trafficking, especially the RAE population of displaced persons from Kosovo (Ristanović-Nikolić et al, 2004).

It is also held that the norms in their communities sustain the patriarchal system. They are guided and behave in line with customary law; customs often come before and above all formal legal norms. This endows men with unlimited power in managing the family and making decisions. Roma women have a subordinated position in relation to men and their role is defined by male family members (father, brother, husband). They have no right to independent and free choice even in the main spheres of life. Going for a walk or working in town are for the most part privileges of male family members. If a woman or a girl dares to violate this ban, she will be severely punished by her family and the community (Drobnjak N, 2005).

Female children are assigned to help their mothers with house chores and with younger siblings. This kind of support is very important in this type of community, and is often considered necessary and highly appreciated, so that girls are restricted and denied schooling. They also get married at a young age, most frequently according to the established and traditional custom of selling and buying the bride, where the father has the crucial role. When a girl gets married, she becomes entirely her husband's property, since he has bought her and paid a fair price to her father (Delija F. et al, 2005). This custom is often interpreted as indication of trafficking in persons. Although that may sometimes be the case (especially if the bridegroom lives abroad), the custom cannot automatically be identified as trafficking in persons. As opposed to that, the cases when the family loses all contact with the children or they suspect they have become victims of trafficking require thorough investigation. This, however, cannot be done in Montenegro, due to the lack of official statistics on this population. The way of life, families that beg, the custom of selling the bride – all this influences the risk of trafficking. It is, however, very difficult, precisely due to the cultural context, to determine incidence of trafficking.

Children in institutions

A child without parental care is the child that has no parents or whose parents are not performing their parental duties (Korać and Mijušković, 2004). In psychological and sociological studies it is held that the family is primary institution of socialization and support, which is an important aspect of children's development. Family gives a child a sense of belonging, solidarity and cooperation, emotional balance, shelter and the foundations for building the identity. The question is what happens with the children who have been totally deprived of this type of care and support; how do they perceive themselves and the world around them?

The primary method of providing protection to children without parental care in Montenegro has been placement in an institution. The successes of such placement have been confirmed in reports with reference to the residents' progress in education and their integration and acceptance into the community. The only problem stated in the reports was the overprotection provided in the institution, which rendered their integration into regular life more difficult, especially for the residents who stayed in the institution for children without parental care (hereinafter referred to as "Home") for over a long period of time. This is manifested in particular at the time when the residents leave the Home and start independent life (Korać and Mijušković, 2004).

A child leaves the Home after turning 18; the relevant institutions take care of them for a maximum of six months after they leave. It is said that 'becoming of age' is an important starting point for independent life. This is in contradiction with the previous reports that say that, regardless of being formally of age, institutionalized children do not fully develop the capacity to take care of themselves. This shows that it is necessary to question the extent to which the position in the framework of conceptualized institutional care puts the child at risk or builds his/her resiliency for situations or choices s/he needs to make after leaving the institution.

There is a rather small volume of research concerning children without parental care in Montenegro. There is no data on trafficked children from such institutions. As regards data provided in the available references, the latest ILO research states that more than half of the identified children trafficked for house help, commercial sexual services, to work in agriculture or as street vendors, were precisely children without parental care raised in institutions (UNICEF/IPU, 2005). The UNHCR report discusses the possibility of illegal adoption of children from institutions for trafficking purposes (2006).

The explanation for the vulnerability of these children to trafficking is that children raised in institutions usually do not have a sense of belonging to the institution. An institution, in its essence, is unable to provide adequate emotional and social support that would incite children to develop a sense of belonging and closeness. The opportunities available to such a child in the system and in a predominantly poor society marked by various transition and privatization processes appear very limited in that they do not provide prospects for a safe and certain life after leaving the institution. For this reason, the situation of accepting tempting offers and closeness and care expressed by the traffickers is highlighted, which may put them at risk of trafficking (UNICEF/IPU, 2006).

What internal mechanisms do these children develop? How do they perceive themselves and their environment? What opportunities, alternatives and options do they see as feasible in this environment? By addressing these issues, this research aims to recognise and consider the risk and resiliency of children living in institutions, and the extent to which that may be related to trafficking.

Conclusion on the reference materials presented

The previous section presented the statements given in the available literature materials in relation to understanding the factors that influence children's vulnerability to trafficking, using the ecological model. The data analyzed here referred to the risk factors relevant for the state of Montenegro. We included a special review of the target groups involved in the research.

This model enabled us to identify certain gaps in the available literature. Existing studies generally consider risk factors in isolation and do not deal with resiliency among children exposed to the same factor. These studies do not provide an explanation as to why children that are exposed to the same risk factors will not undergo the same degree of violence, exploitation and trafficking. For instance, not all poor children are trafficked.

There are multiple roads that lead to trafficking, including a complex series of factors influencing one another and the child in an intricate manner. For example, the socio-cultural and economic context influences parents' employment and educational level. Parents' employment and educational attainment influence the way they raise and treat their children. This in turn affects the norms and values that children grow up with and the types of options (choices) that are available to them. These factors influence the type of decisions they make and the way they behave in given circumstances.

Likewise, isolated consideration of these factors does not provide an understanding of the interplay of these factors on a particular child. As a result, it is important to explore the phenomenon of trafficking from the perspective of the child. This research establishes the connection between the impacts of different factors that shape a child's perception of his/her life, in an attempt to analyze the extent to which certain circumstances, relationships or characteristics may put the child at risk or provide him/her with protection.

METHODOLOGY

Regionally designed phases

Research design started at a regional workshop held in Tirana, January 25-27, within the regional Child Trafficking response programme in Southeast Europe (CTRP). The aim of the workshop was to develop, in a participatory process, a regional research plan and identify the steps towards research implementation at the regional and country levels. The project included 7 countries/entities: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia and the United Nations administered province of Kosovo (hereinafter referred to as 'Kosovo'). Workshop participants were country project coordinators and researchers assigned to carry out the project and participate in its implementation. It is organised by the CTRP Regional Management Team based at Save the Children Office in Tirana, and run by Dr Sophie Laws, who is active in the field of children's participation in research, and Dr Margaret Lynch, who works with abused and neglected children.

On participatory research involving children

At the workshop it was decided that this research project would involve children at risk of trafficking and would be based on action-participatory research methodology. This methodology rests on the notion that children are individuals with rights of their own, rather than objects that possess only the needs identified and approved by adults. It is also important to take into account that children are active members of society and form an important part of its existence and functioning. The key argument is that research needs to be focused and directed in line with children's capacities, instead of risks and vulnerabilities (weaknesses) that most research projects concerning children are based on, especially concerning the issue of trafficking.

It is necessary to emphasise the specific nature of this research project with regard to the position assigned to children:

⇨ Children's developmental needs, capacities and abilities must be taken into account, in order to help children in need, prevent risk and enhance their resiliency.

⇨ Starting from the child's right to expression, information and establishing connections, it is necessary to take into account children's perspective, which implies active listening to children in order to understand their view of the world, their perspectives, concerns, and dilemmas. This is guided by the principle that it is necessary to learn from children, and not just about children.

⇨ Children are placed in a broader context, including the social context, community, family, peer group, and the child's active role in the society.

Common Research Protocol

Based on the exchange of experience and opinions during the regional workshop, it was decided to design a regional Research Protocol. Each of the participating countries observed the regionally designed Research Protocol, adjusting it to the specific country context. A common timeline was established at the regional level as well. Data was analyzed at both national and regional level, resulting in national and regional reports. In line with the specific country context, each country participating in the research conducted analysis of the available reference materials, adjusted research tools to groups of children and adults involved in the research and developed a national report.

The Regional Research Protocol included research objectives and tasks, methodological guidelines related to data collection, formatting, analysis and report writing.

The Research Protocol, developed by the Regional Research Advisor **Dr. Zosa De Sas Kropiwnicki**, is presented below.

The research was designed around three objectives, each of them encompassing specific tasks.

The topics addressed in this research were derived from the objectives and tasks. Research questions that were incorporated in the research tools were derived from each of the topics.

Research topics were as follows:

1. **Risk and resiliency;**
2. **Social support and protection;**
3. **Safety and danger;**
4. **Mechanisms and processes;**
5. **Decision-making;**
6. **Expectations/hopes for the future;**
7. **Evidence-based policy.**

Sampling technique

The sampling technique that was utilized in this research was that of snowballing, which is employed when it is difficult to establish contact with a certain group of children or respondents. The respondents participated in the creation of the sample by indicating or referring the researchers to children and/or adults it would be important and helpful to interview. This added a special quality to the information obtained during the research. The sample is not based on the principle of being representative - instead, the quality of the information obtained comes before the quantity, i.e. the size of the sample. The quality of the information obtained is determined by whether the research questions are answered and research objectives met.

Tools

The tools used in this research were: analysis of available reference materials, observation, semi-structured interviews, and focus groups. As a form of assistance in tool design, the regional research advisor developed guidelines and examples that accompany the protocol. The tools were designed based on these guidelines and the specific country contexts.

Analysis of reference materials

Analysis of the available reference materials served as guidance and information about the available general analyses related to child trafficking, explanations and definitions of this phenomenon, trends in incidence in the specific country, views on the factors that sustain the trafficking phenomenon at macro, interpersonal and individual level.

The available reference materials used here included the academic approach to trafficking, studies and reports issued by the government and non-governmental organizations, and articles published in journals and magazines (the previous section contains the results of an analysis of these materials).
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Observation

Observation is a basic tool for conducting an action-participatory research, which can be used to fulfill many research functions; as such, it was an indispensable tool for this research. Observation was used to evaluate the efficiency of methods and techniques, for example to select the questions to ask, the time to talk to children, the language that would ensure the child understands the question. It was also useful in collecting data on children's decision-making processes, their appearance, emotions, level of understanding, relationships, and socio-economic status. In addition, observation and time spent in a community represent a good method to establish rapport with children and build trust between the researcher and the child.

Observation needs to encompass the respondent's general appearance, expression of emotions, level of understanding, events, mechanisms and processes in the child's life, decision-making, social support, socio-economic environment, cultural context, safety and danger, as well as the relation between the respondent and the researcher.

All these things were written in the research dairy by both researchers.

Interviews

Interviews used in this research were specially designed for children and adults respectively. Unstructured and semi-structured interviews were employed.

'Guided conversation' employed in semi-structured interviews was relaxed and focused on the research topics, which enabled us to obtain comprehensive answers to the questions asked.

It was important to build trust with children and set clear objectives and tasks, as well as to clarify expectations, listen actively, make notes or record each answer, ensure that children were safe during and after the interview, be creative and flexible in conducting the interviews and exploring research topics.

Focus groups

In conducting and designing focus groups, the children's best interest was prioritized from the start and all efforts were made to make them feel comfortable during the focus groups. The atmosphere was confidential, so as to enable children to freely exchange their experience and events and learn about and from each other. It was very important to adjust the activities to the research topics and expand the discussion following individual activities to obtain as much useful information as possible. We aimed for focus group activities to be useful, fun and well timed. All the information obtained in the focus groups was recorded in the form of notes or voice-recordings.

Research Code of Ethics

In working with children, the following ethical requirements were observed throughout the research process:

- ❖ Explain research objectives and tasks to children and other participants in the research in a way that is understandable to them;
- ❖ Respect children's dignity, abilities and competences throughout the research;
- ❖ Ask the child or adults responsible for the child for permission for the child to participate in the research;
- ❖ In the course of the research, develop a friendly and a relationship of trust with the respondents;
- ❖ Create a comfortable environment for research implementation;
- ❖ Observe the child's right to say no to participation in the research or to being photographed;
- ❖ Protect the identity and privacy of each child and adult participating in the research;
- ❖ Respect the culture and tradition of each respondent;
- ❖ Minimize the imbalance of power between researchers and respondents, especially with children;
- ❖ Always keep the promise given to the children and/or other respondents participating in the research;
- ❖ Confirm the authorship and influence and importance related to the results of the research of both children and other research participants;
- ❖ Share research results with the respondents, in particular with children;
- ❖ Throughout the research reflect on researcher's beliefs, knowledge and experience and their impact on their attitude and the research process.

Data collection

We aimed for the information obtained from children to be as accurate and authentic as possible, and recorded the interviews and focus groups whenever possible. For the purpose of good qualitative analysis, we made written transcripts of the interviews and focus groups.

Data processing and analysis

The data obtained was qualitative and processed by means of qualitative analysis, by categories derived from children's responses to the research topics. The responses were interpreted at the three levels that refer to the lives of children: macro, interpersonal and individual level.

In analysis and interpretation, we used the triangulation technique of linking, comparing the responses related to one of the following categories: children's perspective, relevant adults (key informants) and available reference materials.

Available references ⟷ **Key informants for the group of children**

Children
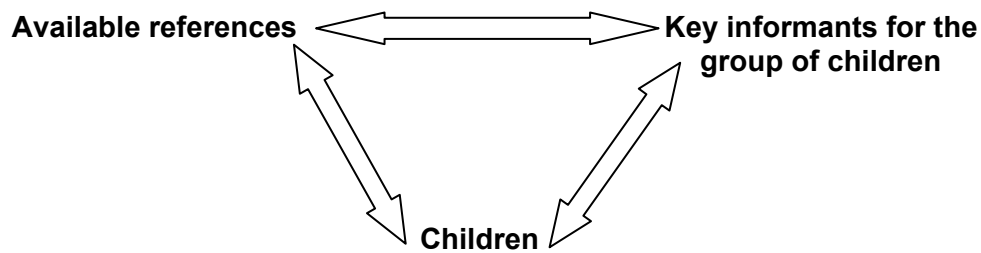
Research timeline

	January/February 2006	March/April/ May 2006	June/July 2006	August 2006	September / October/ November 2006	December 2006 January/ February 2007	March/ April 2007
Regional and country preparations	→						
Designing the overall methodology at regional and country level		→					
Field work			→	→			
Data transcription				→	→		
Data processing, analysis and interpretation					→	→	
Final national reports						→	
Final regional report						→	→
Results published and presented to the public and to research participants							→

Regional training events

The initial regional workshop, where participatory approach was applied in designing the research, was followed by two more regional workshops. One took place in Belgrade in late April, and the other in Budva in early October.

A regional workshop for Serbia, Bosnia and Montenegro was organised in mid-April, with the aim of developing the methodology, tools and approach to children. The workshop had a practical character and provided training in the application of participatory research techniques and direct work with children. It was conducted by the Regional Research Advisor, and was attended by the regional management team as well. The practical part of the workshop included testing the tools in actual work with children.

The workshop resulted in concrete conclusions and steps for the future work. The tools developed had to be further adjusted for conducting fieldwork with particular groups of children. During fieldwork, it was necessary to reflect on how personal experience, profession, knowledge and emotions influenced and/or could influence the research process (see below).

The regional management team organised a workshop in Budva in early October, gathering researchers from all the seven countries included in the project: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, United Nations Administered Province of Kosovo,

Romania and Serbia. The aim of the workshop was active exchange of experience and preliminary results, which were presented by each team. In addition to the preliminary results, the exchange focused on presenting the methodology used by the teams and fieldwork experience. This approach provided a more comprehensive picture of the region - it showed that the lives of children across the region contained many common features and that we shared many common dilemmas. It also showed that this kind of research could contribute to building strategies and programmes that would support children's resiliencies and provide them with a better and fuller life.

National training events

National workshops were held in Podgorica. Those were one– or two-day events during which the Regional Research Advisor, provided necessary support and additional training to our team.

The first workshop, held in early June, focused on testing the tools designed by our team. In addition, it included support to researchers related to fieldwork.

The second workshop, held in early September, focused on training for analysis of obtained data by categories related to research topics, and was tailored to the needs of our team.

The third workshop, organised in late November, provided training on in-depth analysis and interpretation of obtained data and on the final report development.

Tool piloting

The research tools that were designed and adapted for application in Montenegro were piloted, with the aim to provide active participation of children in their development. The pilot was conducted with a group of 30 children aged 13 to 18, the age group selected for the research, during the period May 15-31 2006. Pilot focus groups were conducted with adolescents from the NGO ''Youth Centre'' from Podgorica (1 focus group) and from the private high school ''Luča'' from Podgorica (3 focus groups). Pilot interviews were organised with students of the tourism secondary school from Podgorica (4 interviews), one adolescent from the RAE population working on the street (washing car windows), and one adolescent girl from the shelter for victims of domestic violence run by the NGO Safe Women's House from Podgorica.

Table 4

	FOCUS GROUP	INTERVIEW
Total	4	6

The focus groups had a mixed gender structure, while the interviews involved 4 girls and 2 boys.

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Children took an active part and showed interest in the focus groups and interviews; they felt it was very important that they were able to contribute their ideas to a research conducted by adults.

The suggestions they provided were very useful and important for the final design of tools. With regard to the semi-structured interview, it was possible to obtain much more detailed information from the visual techniques (e.g. art), especially when a child was traumatized in some way or his/her verbal expression was poor. This had been considered in the course of designing the semi-structured interviews with children. Asking "Why?" with the aim to obtain as detailed information as possible led to the respondent answering only "Because", which hindered the effort. At the end, the children explained that they felt insecure and frustrated when they were unable to expand their answers. Modified questions, such as: "How do you see that now?" or "What do you think about that now?" or "Can you explain that to me?" proved to be more efficient.

In the focus groups, it was necessary to make a stronger link between the energizers or relaxing activities and the aim of the particular focus group. Small groups proved more efficient than individual work in a group. Children said that they felt more productive and self-assured in small groups, and learned much more about others and about the topic that way. They did not manage the activities that involved role-play and/or drama well, since "as if" situations and role-play are not very common in our culture, and our schools favour verbal presentation and discussion.

The experience acquired while working with children and the suggestions they provided were very helpful in further adjustment of the tools. We would like to use this opportunity to thank all the children who helped us make our tools more efficient and better suited to their world and their view of reality.

Research sample

After consulting the available reference materials, people involved in working with children, and Save the Children UK Montenegro Office, two groups of children were selected for the research:

❖ RAE children, IDPs from Kosovo, living in the Konik collective centre near Podgorica;

❖ Children without parental care, living in "Mladost" Children's Home in Bijela.

The adolescence age was identified in a number of publications and in the interviews with relevant people concerned either with children or the phenomenon of trafficking. Therefore, the age group included in this research was 13-18 years of age.

The sample of **RAE children displaced from** Kosovo included, with the use of the snowballing technique, 31 children, whose answers were transcribed and used for the purpose of in-depth data analysis. The researcher spent one month in the community, doing intensive work with children, establishing contacts, building trust in informal and structured interviews. During that time, she observed in detail their way of life, their relationships with

persons important to them, decision-making and child labour; this was all recorded in the researchers' journal.

Transcripts of semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used for the purpose of analysis. The table below shows the number of interviews and focus groups.

Table 5

	Interviews	Focus groups
Total	20	8

Roma and Egyptian children, both boys and girls, were interviewed. Tables below show the structure of the sample by nationality and sex. Interviews were conducted with children aged 11-18.

Table 6

	M	**F**
Total	8	7

Table 7

	Roma	**Egyptian**
Total	9	6

Focus groups were homogenous with regard to sex: 5 of them were conducted with boys and 3 with girls. The groups were mixed with regard to nationality (Roma, Egyptians). Girls were aged 13 – 16, while boys were aged 14 - 16.

The sample of **children without parental care**, created using the snowballing technique as well, consisted of 22 children, whose answers were transcribed and used for the purpose of in-depth data analysis. One month was allocated for conducting intensive work with children and sharing their life in "Mladost" Children's Home in Bijela. The techniques used in fieldwork were observation, research journal, semi-structured interviews and focus groups.

Transcripts of semi-structured interviews and focus groups were used in the analysis. The number of interviews and focus groups is shown in the table below.

Table 8

	Interviews	Focus groups
Total	10	15

The structure of interviewees by sex:

Table 9

	M	**F**
Total	4	6

The interviews were conducted with children aged 13 - 18.

Focus groups were conducted with two groups; children were allowed to choose the group they wanted to join. The groups were open, and their gender and age structure varied from one focus group to the next. However, it is possible to determine that one group consisted of younger adolescents about to complete elementary school - except for one 17-year old girl who insisted on joining this group - while the other group consisted of secondary school students. The first group consisted of children aged 13-15, and the second one of those aged 16-18.

Besides children, the research included participation of adults who have a certain role in the children's lives or belong to organizations focused on children or trafficking. Adults took part in interviews, which were taken into account in data processing and analysis. A total of 15 interviews were transcribed and used in the analysis. A number of key informants – community or institution representatives, took part in the research: domicile and displaced persons from the RAE community; staff members of "Mladost" Children's Home from Bijela; representatives of government institutions; representatives of NGOs (international and local) focused on children and/or trafficking.

Application of tools in fieldwork-strengths and weaknesses

Children from RAE community, IDPs from Kosovo

Observation of RAE children went on undisturbed; the researcher's presence in the camp was never questioned. Semi-structured interviews that were designed as guided conversation inspired children, made them feel efficient and free to provide information. One-on-one communication made them feel important and they made an effort to provide answers that would really contribute to the aim. Their poor knowledge of the language and low level of verbal expression were not a problem, since we used simplified questions. Children expressed themselves freely, sometimes using visual techniques. The interviews provided quality information that contributed to a smooth research progress.

In the focus groups, however, it was rather difficult to make the children, otherwise unaccustomed to group work, focus on the instructions and the topic being discussed. It took several days of working with the group to establish group rules and group dynamics that would focus on the tasks. Focus groups included a variety of fun activities intended to meet the children's need for movement and action. These sessions and their dynamics, marked by frequent interruptions and free associations, along with the freedom inherent to this type of expression, made the children feel free, relaxed, and trustful and made it easy for them to express their thoughts and emotions. The focus groups provided quality and valid information concerning their lives, the existing dangers, their hopes and dreams, the support available to them, and the decision-making processes. It is worth noting that focus groups were homogenous with regard to gender, since RAE culture does not allow boys and girls to mix in activities that take place outside the home.

Children without parental care, residents of "Mladost" Children's Home, Bijela

Observation of this group of children went on undisturbed as well. Compared to RAE children, they showed more interest in group work, which is practiced in the Home. The rules were adopted smoothly. However, it needs to be said that their focus on the individual topics was short and that guided discussions had to include various games related to the topic. These games had to be dynamic, as they enjoyed them and felt inspired to focus on the discussion and tasks that followed. These children were familiar with group work and workshops, so that it took them a short while to relax and feel comfortable to openly discuss the topics with the researcher.

With regard to the interviews, they needed some time to be able to freely participate. It took them more time to decide to participate in this activity. However, once the interview started, it showed that they enjoyed this particular one-on-one communication and that it made hem feel special and important. They gave very open answers and it seemed that they missed that kind of communication. They often asked for the interview to continue. This shows the strong need of this group of children to be heard, appreciated and respected as individuals with special needs, desires, and thoughts. This needs to be considered and acknowledged.

It is necessary to point out that the designed tools proved to be well-suited to the groups of children involved in the research; this refers in particular to the flexibility in their application and the opportunity they provide for an active role of children in the research process. The tools proved very helpful in different situations and projects. This research technique enables us to learn a lot from children – tools designed in this manner make it impossible not to hear and respect children's views and thoughts and feed them into further work. This method demonstrates considerable appreciation and respect for children.

Monitoring at local and regional level

Monitoring at local and regional level was organised in the form of monthly reports, summarized for the purpose of a monthly regional newsletter that was delivered to all country teams. This served to exchange experiences and monitor the progress in individual countries and at the regional level. In addition, there was ongoing communication with the Regional Research Advisor.

A more dynamic form of monitoring was organised through workshops and training events at regional and country level. Thus, the active and participatory role of all the participants added to the research process.

Researchers from the Montenegrin team held weekly meetings for mutual support and supervision of fieldwork. The preliminary and final analyses were the result of teamwork. Teamwork proved a very inspirational, productive and efficient method for data processing, analysis and interpretation as well as the final report development.

In the beginning, weekly meetings were organised with Montenegro Project Coordinator. Later on in the process, she monitored our work using fieldwork and monthly reports. We had

day-to-day e-mail contact and received from the Project Coordinator reference materials and reports useful for the research.

Constraints

This research possesses certain constraints related to different levels.

To start with, it is possible to question the selection of the two particular groups in relation to numerous other recorded groups of children identified as vulnerable to trafficking. The findings relevant only for these groups cannot be generalised. It is worth mentioning that this research method does not set generalization of results as its priority. The focus was on identifying risk and resiliency and the way of life of the selected groups of children, which we see as the only way to obtain specific and detailed data for further preventative anti-trafficking programmes intended for these groups.

It is also possible to question the sample as non-representative for the target groups. We believe that a holistic approach in understanding risk and resiliency of children at all levels requires in-depth exploration of obtained data, with emphasis on quality rather than quantity. The snowballing technique is a sampling technique that is limited in that it may provide identical information from children who interact in the same social spaces, which then establishes a framework for the specific information obtained. The validity of research data rests precisely on the quality, specificity and depth of intensive day-to-day work and time spent with children sharing their context.

We need to emphasise that the information obtained using this method of work provides an in-depth and essential understanding about the lives of these groups of children, which facilitates understanding and identification of specific risks and resiliencies. Such understanding of risk will enable us to provide efficient protection for children and strengthen their resiliency in a manner that is suitable, well timed and conforms to their needs.

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

RAE community, IDPs from Kosovo living in the camp at Konik, Podgorica

Observation of the camp for RAE displaced persons from Kosovo at Konik, Podgorica
(Excerpts from the research journal of Verica Mirović)

This research was conducted with the RAE population of IDPs from Kosovo. After the outbreak and escalation of the conflict in Kosovo, more than 4,000 members of the RAE population fled to Montenegro. They were placed in the collective centre Konik – Vrela Ribnička, Podgorica.

The camp is quite far from the town, and therefore from all the institutions. It is situated on the outskirts of Podgorica and surrounded by a wire fence, which adds to the feeling of isolation and exclusion. Initially, the RAE population lived in tents; however, most of the tents were destroyed or damaged in a snowstorm in December 1999. Soon after that, the Italian humanitarian organization INTERSOS together with the UNHCR, the municipality of Podgorica and other agencies, built the pre-fab facilities that they currently live in. INTERSOS managed the camp until August 2003, when the Red Cross took over. Currently, there are around 1,600 people in the camp and around 1,000 RAE displaced persons in private accommodation.

Members of the RAE population have very limited living space that consists of one or two small rooms; most of them sleep on mattresses on the floor, and few of them have beds. The size of their families renders the space available inadequate in many respects. Besides the limited space available to individual families, there is a feeling of restriction in the whole camp and among all members of the RAE community. Many families live next to each other, which they all perceive as a problem and a cause for arguments and poor relations with neighbours. This was particularly emphasised by the respondents, since most of these families used to have their own homes and separated living spaces, which was important and provided them with a sense of privacy. There is no hot water and no bathrooms in the camp. There are shared toilet facilities at the level of the camp, and water for drinking and washing that they have to fetch in buckets. Immediately after the camp was built, there were bathrooms that functioned for a short while; they have been out of order ever since, due to the unresolved issues of competencies and responsibilities regarding the electricity bills. It is almost impossible to stay in the camp due to the pervasive unpleasant smells that cannot be avoided. There is trash all around the camp, threatening with disease, which is a fact that worries all the people from the camp. Medical assistance is provided in the camp – the Ministry of Health opened an outpatient facility and doctors from local hospitals provide basic medical services for a few hours each day. It is extremely difficult to maintain the necessary hygiene level in these circumstances, so the hygiene of most individuals and families is very poor. Children can be seen walking and playing in the camp without enough clothes on, often barefoot and with rather untended appearance.

The impressions about the members of this community and the atmosphere in the camp have changed over time. During their first years in the camp, people relied more on each other, the communication was better and warmer, and although they had lost everything in Kosovo, they showed more energy and optimism. Now, the picture is different: there is apathy, numbness, loss of trust, hurt feelings, and mutual intolerance that members of the RAE community recognise and explain by their impression that everyone has abandoned them, that their status in Montenegro has not been defined, they have small or no chances for finding a stable job, which increases their feelings of insecurity and anxiety. A large number of families in the camp live in deprivation; they search the garbage containers and bins in the town to survive.

Several different groups live in the camp: Roma, Gabel, Magjupi, Ashkali, Egyptians, Goranians etc. Even in these restricted circumstances, they cherish all of their socio-cultural specific features and customs. In accordance with their customs, they mark the important dates and events. I had the opportunity to attend a family ceremony on the occasion of circumcision. It was useful to observe the whole event and experience the richness of costumes, traditional symbolic acts and activities performed by certain family members, along with a clearly defined hierarchy and role of each person and their actions.

Since the arrival of the RAE population from Kosovo, I had the opportunity to participate in some support programmes intended for their community, which enabled me to become familiar with their habits, culture, and customs. My contacts with members of this population and their leaders facilitated my entering their community once again, for the purpose of this research.

The Red Cross is in charge of managing the camp. They implement and monitor numerous activities and programmes, and make effort, through daily direct contact with the families in the camp, to assist and improve the living conditions in the camp to the extent of their capacity. Residents of the camp do not deny that some programmes and activities are being implemented in their community; however, they are aware that all that is not bringing about any essential improvement in their living conditions.

I would like to point out that, during my stay in the RAE community, I established quality and close relationships with many individuals and families, in human and professional terms. The time spent with children and the discussions I had with them were precious, as a mutual exchange that gave me personal and professional satisfaction and gave meaning and motivation to my efforts.

Impressions of researcher Verica Mirović
(Excerpts from research journal)

I had the opportunity to work with IDPs from Kosovo for several years within different projects and programmes implemented by international humanitarian organizations in Montenegro. They already knew me, and that made it easier for me to access and enter their community and to access children. I mention this because it is not easy now to enter their community and be welcome, let alone accepted, and have them willing to talk openly. They see all the activities implemented in the camp as something someone is doing for his/her

own sake rather than theirs. This has created suspicion as to the sound motives of those who approach them, and a loss of trust.

In most cases, I established contact in a spontaneous and relatively easy way. Their main motivation was chiefly some kind of concrete help and benefit, so higher motivation was absent. Their thoughts were focused on concrete, practical, life- and existence-related things. They realised to an extent that this research could serve to help someone, but that did not provide them with a clear and main purpose when deciding to be part of this project.

The motivation of most young people to take part in this research lies to a large extent in their wish to spend time together and have fun in a somewhat different way. They were glad to take part in the focus group due to the lack of activities and their need for something new that would change their extremely poor everyday routine, something outside their personal contacts and efforts and activities that mainly come down to spending time together.

Children live in an isolated environment, with no activities, relying only on each other. Many of them search garabge containers, rubbish heaps or dumps for something to sell and earn some money to support the family. Their days are monotonous, lacking activities adequate for their age, needs and desires. With regard to social relationships and support, I can say that most of the children see their parents and their best friends as their biggest support. Only if they trust a person very much, they develop a sense of belonging and safety. Most children are well integrated in the wider social context of their community, feel accepted by their peers and manage to build sound interpersonal relationships.

To summarize the analysis of their answers and comments provided during evaluation and my own personal observations, I can say that they all stated they were glad to have participated in the research, that they enjoyed playing games, being able to draw, discussing many issues, having a chance to talk about their problems. They especially liked the fact that someone cared for them and wanted to help them. They liked the fact that someone showed an interest in the way their days and lives went on, the problems they encountered and the ways they dealt with them, whether they had anyone to help them etc. Some children were particularly satisfied that they were given a chance to step out of their daily routine and activities and discuss, in their words, 'nice things'. When they say 'nice' they mean the better quality, more serious level of addressing some issues; they said they could discuss things in that manner only with a small number of their friends.
During the interviews, children were for the most part open and answered the questions with plenty of trust. When they showed some misgivings as to their ability to provide a good answer, I instructed them to relax and express their thoughts, attitudes and experiences, and that anything they said would be good and there were no mistakes.

For the most part, the interviews were conducted in a pleasant atmosphere. There were times when I was overwhelmed by the feeling of tenderness toward a child that radiated special warmth and sincerity and readiness to talk openly about anything and whose personality was really captivating. During the interviews it crossed my mind (and here my personality and profession stepped in) that there were children who were deprived of a more stimulating and supporting environment that would enable them to fulfill their potential. Many children are deprived of a chance to utilize their potential, and many are not even aware of what they have inside them. Children understood and comprehended most of the topics and questions.

What fulfilled me and gave me the energy and will to continue with my work were the children's desire to spend time together and their lovely directness, when they offered themselves just as they were. That enabled me

to enjoy learning about their lives and personalities. I left each group enriched, which made me gather them again to spend time and work together.

It was a pleasure for me to work and spend time with these children. This pleasure was obscured by the thought and my constant concern, as a researcher, whether I was getting sufficient quality response to support the defined research topics. This feeling of professional responsibility towards the aim of this project, actually, made me feel tense, in varying degrees, throughout my work.

Myself as a person, a psychologist and a researcher - all these selves confronted and competed for predominance in a given moment. I tried, at least at the rational level, to always give the advantage to the researcher, but the psychologist asked to be given some space and influenced the way I saw, heard, derived conclusions. I tried to be a neutral researcher, with no preconceived ideas, open to all that is offered without tinging it with my personal attitude. I tried to see, hear and interpret things, persons and situations in that manner. I keep saying 'tried', because there were instances when I detected my previous knowledge and experience interfering; such interferences probably occurred without me registering or recognizing it.

Children without parental care, "Mladost" Children's Home, Bijela

Observation of "Mladost" Children's Home in Bijela
(Excerpts from the research journal of Itana Kovačević)

"Mladost" Children's Home in Bijela is the only Home for children without parental care in Montenegro. Access to the Home from the main road is unnoticeable, right after a sharp curve, without even a passenger crossing; there is an inconspicuous sign with the name of the institution. Access from the road is very dangerous, as the bus stop is situated on a curve very difficult to scan and there are no traffic lights or speed bumps or even a simple passenger crossing, so that it was an adventure for me to cross the street.

From the road, you approach a beautiful "Jadranska vila" - a three-star hotel of beautiful and attractive architecture, with a perfectly arranged garden. Then you arrive to the Home entrance, which is not visible; when you enter, you find yourself in a large, nicely arranged hall, filled with flowers. Offices of staff members are situated on this floor, together with the instructors' room and the "blue room" where they show films, give parties and lectures (this was also the room where we conducted focus groups).

From this floor, the Home expands into two wings – one female and the other one male, with an equal distribution of mixed-gender, pre-school and newborn children rooms.

The Home faces the sea, and has is a small beach with piers. Inside, there is a concrete basketball playground and a small park. There are some broken swings in the park, and a wooden hut, which is not in a good condition either. Children's activities tend to take part near the sea or around the not so busy road along the seafront; they are not allowed to go to the main road or cross it during the summer unless accompanied by an adult responsible for them.

There are 119 children of school age in the Home - 56 girls and 63 boys, as well as some 60 pre-school children whose number and structure, according to the social worker in charge of this age group, change very fast due to requests for adoption. The procedure for adoption is much more demanding for a citizen of Montenegro than a foreign citizen.

Three children under their custody are currently at university (two in Belgrade, studying diplomacy and cookery, and one in Podgorica, studying at the Electrical Engineering Faculty).

Children are divided in groups, "families", as they call them. Each floor belongs to an individual family and encompasses rooms, a shared bathroom, a living room with couches and TV and DVD sets where they spend their free time, and a dining room, where they have their meals. Children are responsible for keeping the rooms that belong to their family tidy and taking care of their premises.

During summer holidays, the wing that belongs to girls is rented, so that children move from their rooms to the other wing (male), to other children's rooms, merge with other groups, and spend their summer there. There are not enough beds in the rooms, so they sleep on mattresses on the floor or on the terrace (though they also tend to sleep on the terraces because of the heat). A certain number of children visit their parents or relatives in the summer.

It seems that the guests become the focus of attention of the Home management, instead of children's accommodation and commitment to them. Children from the Home work in the kitchen and serve meals, and get some remuneration for that.

Researcher Itana Kovačević
(Excerpts from research journal)

On my first day at the Home, I visited the "families", sensing on the very first day, in these informal contacts with children, that they enjoyed contact, communication and meeting new people. When they heard I would be coming to the Home on a daily basis and spending time with them in order to learn about their way of life, they accepted that and showed plenty of interest. I noticed that their questions concerned the schedule of my stay rather than its purpose. I think that my characteristics - age, gender clothes (casual) – contributed to children smoothly accepting my stay and offering me the opportunity for informal contact. Since they had already moved to a different wing on that day, both older and younger residents attended the introduction.

Younger children spontaneously decided I could visit them in the morning, so although I had not planned to work with them (unless some concrete reason appeared), I arrived earlier and conducted creative workshops with them on my own time. The number of participants that kept growing from one workshop to the next indicated to me that, although I went home a bit more tired, it really meant something to these children, and at least their day was organised differently.

I started group work (adolescents aged 13 – 18), and divided the big group, where it was impossible even to set the rules in an adequate way, into two smaller ones. I saw at least one of the groups each day, most often both, as requested by the children. When there was no group work, I used to go for a swim or a walk along the promenade with them.

Children gladly took part and showed interest in all group activities that were offered. Their attention was often short-lived, and expanding the discussion after completing the activities was evidently demanding for them. During the discussions, when I used additional questions to further elaborate their thoughts, most of their answers were poor with regard to verbalization and differentiation of emotions. As expected, they were happiest when doing energizers. When I observed a fall in their interest and attention, I used games that made them move around and relax. They enjoyed energizers most; they repeated them several times in the group as well as with other residents, the ones who did not take part in the workshop, in the evenings. In the mornings they would tell me how they had organised the game in the family.

The constant surrounding of peers rendered the focus group atmosphere familiar and recognizable and interesting. Individual attention and interviews made me feel their huge need for tenderness and for getting an adult's exclusive attention. After each interview I felt moved by their feeling of satisfaction and their discussion about the time Ii devoted to listen to them and spend with them.

Throughout my work I had the impression that their biggest satisfaction was that they were free to talk about the Home staff and discuss their actions, most frequently in an accusing way. In addition to functioning as a form of release and making them feel more relaxed, this talk also served as an indicator that I had gained their trust. At first, they talked in measured doses - it seemed they were testing whether I would tell anything to anyone. After that phase, they started talking more openly and freely about all aspects of their life at the Home.

As early as the second day of my visit, the children asked to accompany me in buying some snacks, and we agreed that the amount of money to be spent must not exceed 5 euros. After this, we agreed that two members of the group would go each day and buy things for the whole group, but without me. They were visibly happy that I trusted them and let them manage my money without me being present, with clear rules. Until the end of our work together, they managed the money and bought snacks for the group.

They enjoyed most and most acted as a team during creative activities (making a collage, painting, drawing etc). They visibly enjoyed these activities and confirmed that in their evaluation of focus groups. On the other hand, these activities took a long time, which made it more difficult to get them to focus on the discussion afterwards. Interpretation of creative techniques took the form of discussions in smaller groups during the activity.

There were times when I evaluated a focus group as a failure, because I had the impression I rushed through some important answers and information they provided, out of fear that the discussion might turn into individual talk in a group. Throughout fieldwork, I tried hard to achieve a balance between expanding the information received and the participative discussion led by the children, so that I sometimes think this prevented me from expanding some information with a child in a group. Instead, I elaborated certain issues during the interviews.

Sometimes children's answers and reactions during group and individual work filled me with various emotions, especially anger and sorrow, that stayed with me. Anger related to the lack of adequate communication with most of the staff members in the Home, which was mentioned in all the discussions. This confirmed the anger demonstrated previously, whenever any institutional services related to childcare that failed to provide adequate assistance (which corresponds to the situation in the country) came up in some context. Sorrow related to the silence when the subject of family is raised or to attributing huge fairy-tale power to family, most of all to parents.

I had some difficulty in establishing the professional distance between the role of a researcher and that of a psychologist. I felt the need, especially during interviews, to assign them advisory purpose, along with the research one.

It was also difficult for me to turn a child down for workshops, if they showed interest, even if they did not contribute to the discussion or group work.

The issue of violent way of solving problems in instructor-resident and resident-resident relationships recurred in interviews and groups, which made me rather worried. I had the need to discuss this further with the Home staff members. I addressed the social worker and brought her attention to this issue. She explained that this was something they were aware of, but that instructors are provided no support (supervision and education). She also said that this traditional method used among our people, where power relations and force predominate, was believed to be the only one to provide definite and mostly good results. They believe fear and control are the only efficient means to control that number of children to whom this is the only home available and they the only people in charge of their upbringing.

RAE - INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS FROM KOSOVO

KONIK

Macro level

Political factors

In the course of analyzing the data obtained from children concerning different political factors and the children's relevant position, several individual categories were identified. The categories identified and systematized in children's responses related to the following:

- Perception of their life before the war in Kosovo;
- Perception of the war-inflicted consequences;
- Perception of their own life, position and status in Montenegro;
- Perception of the support provided by the state institutions and their functioning;
- Perception of the work, functioning and support provided by other organizations (NGO, international organizations and agencies).

These categories, derived from children's responses, will be used in this section to present the opinions of children and key informants and compare them with the findings of the analysis of references concerning the life of these children and the phenomenon of trafficking.

The perception of their life prior to coming to Montenegro

Life before coming to Montenegro refers to their life in Kosovo, which is perceived as safer; the safety is mainly associated with financial well-being and security. In Kosovo, they used to have houses and cattle, and their parents had jobs and managed to provide for their families. Children have a developed and clear awareness that their life in Kosovo was fuller and better organised. Their talk about their life in Kosovo was marked by serenity and memories of a better life. Their impression did not concern only financial security; they identified closer relations with their peers as well. The communication they had while living in Kosovo was described as warmer and friendlier, among the members of the RAE population as well as between them and the domicile population.

You know we used to live in Kosovo: I had a better time while we lived there, as far as I remember, I just remember I had a nice time and used to play and make friends much more than after we came here.[2]

In their answers and comments, the children identified the change that occurred after they left Kosovo. On coming to Podgorica, they faced colder and more aggressive forms of relationships and behaviour, which they gradually adopted in order to adapt and fit the new context. However, they still did not perceive such behaviour as positive.

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[2] Interview with a child from the RAE population (no.21), Podgorica-Konik, 2 July 2006

The children's impression about the life they led in Kosovo corresponds with the views of the conditions and lifestyle expressed by the adult RAE population members included as key informants. They describe their life in Kosovo as safer, financially secure, well-organised, more peaceful and relaxed. People were focused on planning a better and more certain life by securing a job in public agencies, but now they are oriented towards doing the kind of work that provides merely for subsistence, which they never used to do or appreciate in Kosovo. This makes them feel upset, tense, bad, and in many cases humiliated.

While I was in Kosovo, I knew exactly what to do in each moment, and I had my job. From the beginning of the day, I had a plan and a firm direction to follow. I could orient myself, and now I don't know where I should go or what to do. [3]

It's different in Kosovo, quieter, and life is nicer and more peaceful. People are focused on having work, earning money and surviving, and it's not like that here at Konik. No one has a chance for decent living here. [4]

The perception and opinion on the consequences of war

Children associate war with the feeling of strong fear that they experienced and recognised in all those around them. They do not have a clear awareness of the causes that led to the war; they see NATO bombing as the direct cause and reason why they had to leave Kosovo and the safe life they had there. The feeling of loss predominates in their responses. When talking about loss, they emphasise losing security, habits and lifestyle. They also mention financial loss, placing special emphasis on their own homes and property as part of their identity and sense of belonging.

I'd never throw this ball of string to the people who bombed Kosovo. All that is happening to me, actually all of us who came from Kosovo: living here and not in my own house, that's all because of the people who bombed us. I consider them my biggest enemies, they disturbed my life and now everything is different because of them. I often think why they bombed us - what did we do to them, we could have gone on with the nice life we had. And they could have stayed home and looked after their own business. Before they came we did not need to move and we would surely never have come to Podgorica, if only they hadn't come.[5]

The issue of war was not emphasised in the interviews conducted with adults – these interviews focused more on comparing their life in Kosovo with their life in Montenegro (in

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[3] Interview with a leader of Roma and Egyptians – IDPS From Kosovo, Podgorica -Konik, 28 July 2006
[4] Interview with a child's mother, Podgorica – Konik, 18 July 2006
[5] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14 – 17, Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

the enclosed camp) and on exploring the possibility for resolving the status and issue of RAE children in Montenegro at the moment, in the current circumstances and conditions.

The studies or articles presented earlier (in the section Analysis of Reference Materials) that deal with the RAE population that fled from Kosovo to Montenegro, do not consider their perspectives or feelings about what they used to have or their way of life prior to coming to Montenegro. War is listed as a risk factor, due to all the consequences it inflicts, but there are no specific studies on war and exile as experienced by these particular children, or the degree and manner in which that war reduced their resiliency and enhanced risk.The responses obtained from children and adults from the RAE population show the importance of their perception of life in Kosovo and their experiences and feelings related to the war. To a large extent, these experiences guide their perception of life in Montenegro and their wishes and ambitions for the future.

The perception of their own life, position and status in Montenegro

The children in this study do not see or accept Podgorica and the collective centre at Konik as permanent destination. They describe the camp and the conditions in which they live as "awful","terrible", "being in hell". They see this as a temporary solution; the years of waiting for the decision on where and how they would continue to live foster the feeling of uncertainty and their constant wish to leave. Children perceive this way of life as very different from the life in Kosovo.

...And that we get out of this hell. For me, this camp is hell.[6]

The huge difference between the experience of life in Kosovo and in Montenegro, along with the related uncertainty, fosters the clearly articulated wish to leave. They see leaving as the only viable solution to such a bad and uncertain situation, since they are certain that better life exists somewhere else (since they used to have it). Leaving, connected with migration, is perceived as an independent and desirable path to obtaining a better life. Some associate migration with relatives living in a western country (mainly Italy and Germany), while others associate it with the return to Kosovo. Going abroad is perceived as a certain and completely positive thing, provided that their relatives invite them - such an invitation offers security and better prospects for the future.

I would like my father to get me a passport, so I can go to Italy, to my uncle's. They say life is very nice there. I'd go to him, if father lets me, to live there nicely, walk about, my uncle may find me some work. That would be great. When they came here last year, my cousin told me about the cities and large, beautiful parks, and lakes and many places to go for walks. Look at this place, just trash and stench.[7]

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[6] Interview with a child from the RAE population (no.7), Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006
[7] Interview with a child from the RAE population (no.24), Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006

Going back to Kosovo represents the other available option for migration, an uncertain one. The desire to return is an ambiguous one. Some children wish to return and see their future and perspective in Kosovo. Others do not share that wish. They believe they are safer in Podgorica, since they have developed the mechanisms for survival at least to some extent. They also believe it would be difficult to manage and start again in Kosovo in the circumstances that have changed since they left.

Children feel that return to Kosovo as well as going abroad depend on other people. The return to Kosovo depends on the international organizations that deal with this issue and in most cases provide only houses, not work. They believe that their relatives living abroad would provide them both accommodation and work. They think that such limited forms of support to return provided by the international organizations (e.g. housing) are not encouraging enough to make a strong decision to start over. Instead, they foster the fear that they would not manage to achieve financial security on their own, and they do not fully trust international organizations.

Lack of desire to return among some children may be explained by the uncertainty attached to it, although they perceive the conditions in the Konik camp as inadequate.

How can you plan to return to Kosovo, what would you eat? They give you enough food for three months, and you eat that, and then what are you going to eat - grass? We all have some work and earn some money and have food to eat, and we can't earn money there as we can here.[8]

Adults from the RAE population also emphasise the manner in which extremely poor living conditions in the camp have constrained their children. As one parent stated, "**Our children have been ghettoed for no fault of their own and condemned to live in this camp surrounded by wire fence**".[9]

They are aware of the children's need and desire to leave the camp and search for a better and more promising life. Although they see their need and wish to leave as a possibly risky choice, they state that all children and youth in the camp see leaving as the best possible solution and do not realise the risk it implies.

Shall we return to Kosovo or go abroad, all of us? That is what all these young people in the camp dream about, going to a country where they believe they would have a better life. [10]

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[8] Interview with a child from the RAE population (no.11), Podgorica – Konik, 8 July 2006
[9] Interview with the coordinator of the NGO Association of Roma and Egyptians Displaced from Kosovo, Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006
[10] Interview with a leader of Roma and Egyptians IDPs from Kosovo, Podgorica – Konik, 28 July 2006

Migration of children is seen as potentially risky (especially to western countries) and is often connected with trafficking. The available references contain the awareness that migration is different from trafficking, but do not provide any analysis of the existing strong desire of children to go abroad. Offers of this kind are seen as positive and promising for them and their future life. This implies that such permanent and strong desire makes children more vulnerable to taking up offers to go abroad. Children see going abroad as a resiliency, although it can easily put them at risk of being abused or trafficked. This emphasises the necessity for in-depth study of children's needs, wishes and opinions. This kind of insight is necessary in order to perform adequate work with children and provide timely and efficient assistance.

The perception of the support provided by the state institutions

Some children see and perceive Montenegrin institutions as lacking interest and commitment to provide adequate help and support in resolving the status of the RAE population in Montenegro. They feel that no single institution cares sufficiently and sincerely about their feelings and problems. To a large extent, children acutely feel the absence of protection, the feeling of being welcome, or the sense of belonging. They think that nobody wants to give them help and support that would enable a change of their current status. Children's responses show evident lack of information and awareness as to the individuals and institutions they could turn to concerning various issues and problems. Since RAE children focus for the most part on the concrete and material things, when talking about being deprived of help they refer to their families not receiving social care or old people not receiving pensions. They perceive that as additional evidence of insufficient care on the part of the society. Children are not familiar with the different domains of work of certain state institutions or the resulting individual competences. When talking about desired help and support from state institutions, they do not have any concrete institution in mind; instead, they see them personified by politicians and other individuals who are in a position to improve their lives in the camp, attribute importance to individuals and believe they could improve their life in the camp.

Depends on all those appearing in the news on TV every night, but nothing is going to change, it's all just empty talk.[11]

The perception of the impact and assistance provide by the Montenegrin Government and institutions is illustrated by the following ironic statement of one of the children:

We thank the Government of Montenegro for throwing away all kinds of things, after all, that way enabling us Roma from Konik to survive. Thanks again to Montenegro. I'd like to ask you to make this public, if possible, in the papers and on TV, that we said this and thanked Montenegro for taking such care of us.[12]

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[11] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 13 – 16, Podgorica – Konik, 24 July 2006
[12] Interview with a child (no.29) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 24 July 2006

The opinion of key informants related to the institutions in Montenegro is identical to that of the children: they say that state institutions are not concerned about their welfare and do not provide them with adequate help and support. Adults, unlike children, have a clearer picture of their position and the mechanisms available to institutions to provide them with help. They state that they identified rejection on the part of the state upon arrival, when they were not provided personal identification papers although at the time they had the citizenship of the common state (Federal Republic of Yugoslavia).

Discrimination against Roma population is evident, open and visible wherever you look. No one has managed to obtain identification papers, and ID card is not related to the issue of citizenship, because we used to be one state until the referendum. Now, after Montenegro's becoming independent, they have set a requirement of ten years' residence in order to obtain identification papers, which I think is unheard of.[13]

They see this as evident lack of care and interest for their life and functioning. Their responses contain a negative attitude towards the Government of Montenegro, which, according to them, received considerable donations for helping RAE displaced persons, because they did not feel any concrete help and support precisely from the state institutions. They attribute the failure of RAE persons to find jobs in state institutions to the lack of commitment and support on the part of the state.

Neither the state of Montenegro nor the political elite are ready or interested to deal with and resolve the issue of status of displaced persons from Kosovo. They have no benefit from that, and that is why they don't deal with it. They don't care about us Roma. Why? Because we don't have much influence and we can't jeopardize their politics or their status.[14]

Representatives of the domicile Roma also believe that it is more difficult for displaced persons, members of the RAE population, to make progress and obtain a better life for themselves, than it is for the domicile Roma.

Adults think that this neglect on the part of the state puts their children in a situation where they do not have a sufficient range of quality choices, and makes their future uncertain. They believe that this attitude of the state exposes families and therefore also children to various risks and dangers, including the risk of trafficking.

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[13] Interview with the coordinator of the NGO "Association of Roma and Egyptians Displaced Persons from Kosovo", Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006
[14] Interview with the coordinator of the NGO "Association of Roma and Egyptians Displaced Persons from Kosovo", Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

Montenegrin government has developed a good and detailed Action Plan for the Inclusion of Roma 2005-2015. This document indicates that the state has taken all the necessary steps to improve the status of the RAE population at the territory of Montenegro. Regrettably, it seems that this progress refers to the formal level, since the respondents have not identified any effects or improvements in any segment of their lives. State institutions do not have a record of the exact number of family members for this population, which may hinder and sometimes prevents the implementation and monitoring of institutional programmes intended for RAE children. This may be a possible explanation for the slow manifestation of visible effects of these programmes.

The perception of work, functioning and support provided by other organizations (NGOs, international organizations and agencies)

Children's responses indicate that they received concrete help from international organizations (food, footwear, clothes), which decreased in the recent years and is now almost non-existent, or at least not visible to children. This evident reduction of help creates a feeling of deprivation and an increased impression of poverty among children (see the section on the perception of economic factors below), as well as a feeling of uncertainty about their own position and future life in Montenegro. Children say that such circumstances and discouraging conditions make them consider taking steps towards some kind of change that would provide them with better life. This approach shows, on the one hand, elements of resiliency in the active approach to solving their position. On the other hand, it may imply a risk that children are unable to recognise when making a decision.

I don't believe that things can ever get better here. Those who want something better can only look for it somewhere else, and here things are going to stay as they are forever. Those who had the opportunity have all left, who's remained to live here? How do they live?[15]

Children perceived concrete financial assistance provided by some organization as important and memorable. In addition, they also emphasised the activities that aimed at establishing contact between these children and the domicile ones, and were implemented through structured camping events. Activities of this kind gave them a sense of belonging and reduced their feeling of being marginalised in comparison to the rest of the children in Montenegro (see the section below on social marginalization). It needs to be stated that only children who attend school have had this experience, and exclusively boys, who are granted more freedom in their environment (see the section below on education and construction of gender). The way children perceive such activities is shown in the following quote:

I often remember that, I had such a good time. It was very important to me, I was friends with everyone. Before I thought that they wouldn't be friends with me and then everyone was. I danced with a girl then. She said I was handsome and a good dancer. When I remember that, so often, I cheer up every time. I saw then how nice

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[15] Focus group with children from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 20 July 2006

it was when we were all together and friends like that, and we should do it often. Somehow we were different there, and when we came to school later we knew one another better and were better friends than before. That's why this was nice and important for me.[16]

However, some children do not perceive any essential changes in their lives in general, and condemn and question the work of state institutions as well as international and local organizations, as explained in the following quote:

Do you know a single poor politician or someone from these organizations who do all kinds of programmes? They are all rich, and all they know is to tell stories like the ones from the Red Cross. They, like, take care of us and help us and you see what kind of progress we have made in all these years.[17]

Adult RAE respondents point out the importance and benefits that they derived from the projects implemented by international organizations and agencies. The commitment and concern that these organizations demonstrated in their efforts to improve their living conditions brought attention to them and made the RAE population visible for the general public in Montenegro. Most international organizations that provided concrete and financial help have withdrawn now. Most of the international organizations' programmes still concerned with this population focus on the educational and psychosocial aspect, especially with regard to children. Programmes of this kind are seen as positive, enhancing young people's resiliency and thereby enabling them to spend time in a quality way and overcome the poor living conditions. These respondents also point out that these programmes need to be continuous and long-term in order to be successful.

True and authentic help to children requires that the person who wishes to help them understands these children and finds the right way and approach. In addition, the key informant states that the crucial things for the effect and purpose of any type of assistance and change related to children are: stability, continuity and persistence. All the effort that someone invests and the contents that are offered will be accepted by the children only if we devoted to them a lot of attention over a longer continuous period of time.[18]

There is a certain number of studies and reports, mostly initiated by international organizations, about the RAE population in Montenegro. International organizations have also initiated a number of projects concerning different levels and aspects of life of this population, which always included children. A wide range of activities has been provided,

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[16] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14 – 17, Podgorica – Konik, 8 July 2006
[17] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14 – 17, Podgorica – Konik, 20 July 2006
[18] Interview with the teaching assistant in the camp, Podgorica –Konik, 28 July 2006

such as financial and humanitarian assistance, various educational and psychosocial activities. The latest reports have confirmed all the problems and risks identified for this population in the beginning. Regardless of the evident efforts invested by the organizations, neither children nor key informants perceive any essential changes. Adult RAE respondents stated the opinion that, in order to make significant changes, it was necessary to take into account their specific cultural features. They also emphasised that programmes needed to be permanent and continuous as well as actively involve members of this population.

Economic factors

In their responses, children identified and described the economic factors in relation to the following

- Living conditions in the Konik camp;

- Child labour.

Their description of their life highlights the poverty they are faced with, as will be shown in further elaboration of this factor.

The living conditions of the RAE population in the Konik camp

Children describe the living conditions in the camp as very bad, inadequate and insufficient for meeting their existential and basic needs. Their circumstances are such that they do not have houses, but are provided one or maybe two rooms. Large families, in most cases comprising several generations, livein such spaces. Since there are no beds, most of them sleep on the floor, on mattresses. They do not have plumbing or sanitary installations, as the facilities for common use (outdoor tap and toilets) are provided in the camp. Not having hot water is especially hard for them, preventing maintenance of personal hygiene and acquisition of appropriate routines. Families live very close to each other, the huts built next to or opposite one another so that there is no privacy. The surrounding is filled with trash and unpleasant smells, and even those children who take care and appreciate personal hygiene see themselves as dirty. They are aware of this environment being a potential source of health risks and disease.

In addition to the lack of basic conditions in the camp, there are no facilities and/or areas that would meet the specific needs of children, such as playgrounds, football pitch, or space to play games and have fun. As one child stated, **"We have nothing in this camp that's just for us."**[19] Such circumstances make the children feel constrained; they spend most of their time in the same way and in the same space. Such an inadequate and monotonous environment makes them search for new stimuli or interesting activities, which may put them at risk of trafficking.

For the most part, children do not see any way or possibility of improving the existing living conditions in the camp. Most frequently, they see some politicians or organizations as responsible for that, thus emphasizing the hopelessness of their situation. On the other hand, some children have realised that members of their community, although living in such

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[19] Interview with a child (no.6) from RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 9 July 2006

poor conditions, are not taking any action to improve them. Children are doubtful about the possibility of improving the conditions; at the same time, they do not identify any personal efforts or community initiative aimed to achieve that.

Adult community members think that the living conditions in the camp are very hard, especially for children. They place special emphasis on the absence of hygiene and the risks it poses for children's health. Children's health is highly appreciated. Key informants confirm the description of the camp provided by the children.

I really think these children live in a prisoner's camp, with no hot water or bathrooms, with trash everywhere. Disease and epidemics threatening any day. And there is no chance for that to change and they all know they have no influence, but are completely helpless, standing, watching, waiting. There is nothing either children or adults or families can do to influence their living conditions.[20]

The living conditions of the RAE population described in the Research on RAE Households and Refugees and IDPs (2005) correspond with those described by the children and adults from this community. Their living conditions are considered and analyzed only wihin the category of poverty, and not as a separate category and a multiple risk factor.

Child labour

In the context of the general position presented in the references concerning poverty, it is necessary to underline that children recognise poverty in the living conditions described earlier and in their parents being unable to earn sufficient money or find work. This situation and the threat to their families' survival are some of the main reasons that make them engage in work to earn some money. They perceive work to be a necessity, so that they can help their families to survive. Their age, lack of knowledge and skills prevent them from finding some work that would be more fulfilling and satisfying and would provide them with some security.

I really like to work and earn some money, and I don't like searching for things in the containers, but I have to do it because there is no other way I can earn some money. I can't find any other work. You can't find a job, and I have no education and know no trade[21].

According to children's responses, the types of work they engage in include:
- "Searching the containers", mainly looking for copper, lead and aluminum, and sometimes even for food;

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[20] Interview with a leader of Roma and Egyptians displaced persons from Kosovo, Podgorica – Konik, 28 July 2006
[21] Interview with a child (no.23) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

- Begging;

- Selling things on the market;

- Manual labour;

- Washing the windows of the cars stopping at the traffic lights.

Most of these children understand and accept the fact that they need to work to survive in these conditions. The alternative to the types of work given above is risky behaviour, such as: violent behaviour, theft and sale of stolen goods. According to the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, this type of child labour violates one of the children's rights, the right to being protected from performing work hazardous to the child's health, education or development (Article 32), but these children do not have more adequate means available. They think they would be unable to survive if they were denied the opportunity to work. Thus, guided by the need to survive and strong desire to live, they see work as the best possible solution.

I have to earn money for us to survive, and what else could I do to earn money? There's nothing else I can do. I don't know what I'd do if I didn't beg, there's no changing that.[22]

It's better to do any type of work than steal.[23]

Children show different opinions and attitudes to work. They look at work in terms of the goal to be achieved by means of the money earned. If they are the ones working to provide for the family, they see work as positive and purposeful, which is not necessarily accompanied by a personal feeling of satisfaction and fulfillment. On the other hand, there are children who work to provide for certain needs of their parents (in most cases, the father), and get punished if they fail to do so. Such children see work as negative and coercive, as a form of abuse, which fosters the feelings of discontent and powerlessness, since their work is closely linked to the coercion exercised by the parents and the fear of punishment.

How can he decide to do something else, when there is nothing else a child can do?You tell me what a 10-year old child can do to earn some money. Nothing to do, you know, they have to work to help make a living. There are people who can't afford any bread, and then children have to work. Many children don't dare come home without any money. There are fathers who want to drink beer and they wait for their

[22] Interview with a child (no.21) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006
[23] Interview with a child (no.10) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 10 July 2006

sons to bring them money. My father works, it's not like I am the only one that works[24]

I'm sick of it, but then again I know I have to beg because father would beat me or shout at me, and because we have to eat. I know all that, and still I don't feel like doing it.[25]

Sometimes they find work interesting, since it partly fulfills their need for amusement and games, in the absence of better activities. While working, they make friends and fulfill the need to leave the camp, change the environment and see something different and new.

Although they are for the most part aware that children should not be working, they see work as a necessity in the given circumstances.

I think that children work because they have to, because they are poor and they make them do it. Children don't like to work, and it's not normal to have children work.[26]

There are families where father and/or older brothers work and provide for the family; however, the number of such families in the camp is small, and in most families children have to work in order for the family to survive.

I think for all of us in the camp our day is alike, some just work more and some less. There are children who don't have to work, their father has a job or their elder brother works, so they stay at home or go to school, but still, the majority has to work and go about the town and search for trash or beg people for a few cents. That's the way we live. What can you do, that's how things are.[27]

Children's attitude and relation to work are determined by a number of circumstances. These attitudes are not determined exclusively by the degree of poverty, but are influenced by the living conditions in the camp, family attitude towards child labour, relationships within the family, as well as the child's decision to help the family in this manner.

Community members state that families live in very difficult financial circumstances and that children need to work, since their help is necessary for the family to survive. They qualify this as a very negative thing, but do not see any other choice available to the individual families. They state clearly that, in order to enable children not to work and eliminate the

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[24] Interview with a child (no.21) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006
[25] Interview with a child (no.6) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 9 July 2006
[26] Interview with a child (no.20) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006
[27] Interview with a child (no.30) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 30 July 2006

need for that, the state has to take a more active role in providing families with essential, concrete financial help, such as stable jobs for the parents. There has been no research in Montenegro on child labour, despite the awareness about child labour among the RAE population. Having children in the streets, begging and working, violates one of the fundamental rights of the child guaranteed by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The available studies consider child labour as a form of exploitation of children and often connect it with trafficking. We believe that less attention is paid to the children's perception of work and the meaning work has for them.

Socio-cultural factors

The socio-cultural factors relevant for the life of RAE children fall under the following categories:

- Constructions of gender;

- Importance and practice of early marriage;

- Religion and religious rituals;

- Cultural messages predominating and recognised in their community;

- Specific cultural characteristics of different groups within the RAE population living in the camp at Konik.

Constructions of gender

According to the children in this study, gender roles are clearly defined as boys' and girls' roles. There are some children who do not see these role ascriptions as their own choice, but question and evaluate the defined norms for boys and girls.

We never used to be able to do the same things as boys and it is not right that we should. Women are one thing, men another.[28]

The behaviour expected from boys is to be good, not to lie, steal or fight. It is desirable for them to be dynamic, to protect and provide for their families. They are allowed to go to town and have contact with the outside world – this freedom of movement gives them a sense of freedom, but is also closely connected with the requirement to provide for the family. As one boy stated, "*It's different for us boys - the town is no place for girls, and it's different for us. We are allowed to walk about the town, it's only bad for girls, not for us*".[29]

On the other hand, the desirable and highly appreciated role of a female child, girl or woman is to be good, obey their husband, father or brother, be diligent, keep the house in order and do the house work. They are usually required to stay at home and are not allowed to go to town (unless the need to survive requires that they go to town to work, in which case they have to be accompanied by a family member) or wander about the camp.

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[28] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 13 – 16, Podgorica – Konik, 13 July 2006
[29] Interview with a child (no.23) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

My sisters are not allowed to wander about either; I watch over them, and my older brother who's not married yet, and father and mother too. They stay here in the camp, never go to the town except with us, their brothers, and that very rarely. Why should they go to the town, nothing there to see.[30]

According to the children, many parents see girls getting education as potentially risky. According to them, upon reaching the age of 11 or 12 parents forbid girls to go to school, afraid that they may come into contact with different people and be exposed to the risk of being manipulated and abused.

I used to go to school, but now I no longer go because mother thinks I may hear and see some bad things there and then start doing them myself. That I may come across some bad boys, who'd deceive me. So I no longer go to school, but I don't think the same as mother.[31]

Important decisions concerning the family or any other segment of life are made by men; in most cases, women do not even participate in decision-making.

Children question the existing norms, especially concerning intimate partner relationships, since they directly impede their wishes and plans. They fulfill such wishes by consciously breaking the norms and meeting with a girl or a boy in secret, so as to get by and be accepted by the community. If it became known that the norm forbidding partner relationships before marriage was broken, it would put the girl – but not the boy – at risk of being rejected by the family, relatives and even the community.

I keep thinking how our boys keep changing girls and no one says they could not get a good girl to be their wife. And when a girl does that no one wants to marry her any more and her parents feel disgraced. I know that's how it is and that's why I don't go with boys, but still I think that's neither just nor fair, you bet. Everything's more difficult for us women, and easier for boys.[32]

Children suggest that if boys break these norms they are likely to become abusers, get into fights and enter into petty crime. In comparison, if girls break these norms they might become victims, i.e. be raped, mistreated, or exploited. The conclusion that children make is that observing the traditional norms represents their resiliency to various risks, including that of trafficking.

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[30] Interview with a child (no.29) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 24 July 2006
[31] Interview with a child (no.26) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 20 July 2006
[32] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 13 – 16, Podgorica –Konik, 13 July 2006

Adults from this community confirm that the socio-cultural norms are based on the tenets of the patriarchal system of defined gender roles. They highly appreciate this role ascription and try to cherish them, in spite of the changes happening in the outside world. They expect their children to behave in accordance with the established social norms and perceive compliance with these norms as a form of protection from various risks, including the risk of trafficking.

Strong patriarchal system and its norms in this community are confirmed by the perception of children and adults as well as by available studies. Questioning the norms and making choices that do not comply with the norms are emphasised as a considerable and prominent risk, especially for girls. The studies available to us focus primarily on the roles defined for the female population; they do not question the norms related to boys' behaviour, but define them *a priori* as a resiliency. Children's responses show that risk and resiliency cannot be approached in such a one-sided manner. Although children realise that the norms for girls are stricter, they also realise that boys may be exposed to risk if they fail to observe the norms.

The patriarchal system is risky for children because it creates an imbalance in what is expected from boys and girls. Such a system makes children break the existing norms that frustrate them, which may expose them to various risks.

Importance of marriage and early marriage

According to the respondents, the institution of marriage is very important, appreciated and respected, especially as far as girls are concerned. Early marriage is related to the position of women, as well as the custom of 'selling the bride'. Children state this is a custom among Roma, but is not cherished by the Egyptians. However, the central role of the father in making the decision regarding marriage and the choice of partner for his daughter is recognised among both Roma and Egyptians.

There is this thing with Roma taking money and selling their daughters when they get married, but all Roma do that, that's the custom. When a boy wants to get married, he needs to get the money and give it to her father, and then he can take the girl.[33]

The custom of having girls marry early comes from the belief that a girl who enters partner relationships very early and outside marriage breaks a very important cultural norm. Parents see early marriage as a way of protecting girls from breaking these norms, and as a way of protecting the family from being condemned by the community and disgraced due to a girl's risky behaviour. The girls' responses contained some misgivings as to the chances of their parents making a wrong choice of husband for them. If that happened, a girl would be on her own in facing possible marital problems and would also be aware that it would be very difficult for her to get out of a troublesome situation. Although the parents' decision represents a potential threat for them, they say they would obey and fully agree with their choice of husband for them.

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[33] Interview with a child (no.10) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 10 July 2006

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My father and mother, they are going to look for him. But he may not be good, who can tell? I would not want to get married so early, I am still young. You see how my sister got married young, and now she already has a one-year-old son at the age of 15. I don't want to get married that early, and that's why I know I have to be good and not do anything bad, and I can't hang out with boys, because then father would find me a husband right away and I would have to go to his place. As soon as a girl does not do as her father says, he starts looking for a husband for her, to make sure she does not bring disgrace to him.[34]

Adult members of the RAE population see early marriage as a part of their culture and traditional norms. They describe the marriage ritual as necessary to protect their daughters from being manipulated by men and taking the wrong path.

I know that sometimes a man wants to sell his daughter, when she takes the wrong path and he then wants to save her and to find her a husband immediately.[35]

They particularly don't like their daughters to go to school after the age of eleven or twelve, because they are afraid of what may happen to them there. If a girl is growing, and going to school, as soon as she gets her period her parents become afraid of something happening to her, because we get married early. We give three thousand for a girl, or sometimes less, depends on the family and how rich they are. If the girl proves not to be a virgin, she is returned, and the father pays back double the amount. Plus, he pays for another wife. This is an old custom. So it's dangerous, because she may meet someone and fall in love and have sex, and that's then a huge problem and disgrace for the family. So, parents like their daughters to stay home. This is what Roma do; it's easier with Egyptians.[36]

On the other hand, representatives of state institutions or NGOs whose work is in some way related to child trafficking consider this custom as very risky and condemn it. They believe that it can serve as cover for various forms of manipulation, including trafficking.

In the studies available, this custom is additionally explored and usually highlighted in relation to trafficking. It is mentioned exclusively when listing the risks of trafficking relevant for this population, but without further exploring the way it is perceived and explained by the community. In this research, we conducted an in-depth analysis of both this custom and

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[34]Interview with a child (no.26) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 20 July 2006
[35] Interview with a child's mother, Podgorica – Konik, 18 July 2006
[36] Interview with education assistant in the camp, Podgorica –Konik, 28 July 2006

the way it is perceived by both children and adults from this community. Contrary to the available literature, they consider the custom of early marriage as protection from risk and manipulation. In their view (primarily the parents'), a girl is protected by marriage and her husband takes over the role of giving her protection.

Religion and religious ritual

Some children perceive religion as very important, especially those of the Islamic religious background. They associate religion with security and a resiliency mechanism, because it provides them with a sense of belonging. They attribute a lot of importance to prayer and the discussions afterwards. Gatherings of this kind give them a feeling of security, because they get an opportunity to elaborate and discuss various topics, including their own dilemmas, feelings and fears. This gives them a feeling of serenity and peace.

Then I go to my brother's and there I learn about God, with my brothers and sisters, and we pray 4-5 times a day. Then we talk about God and prayers, and we spend time together, and so the time passes... Praying to God - I would never want to change that.[37]

Relevant community members also see religion as very important, stressing that it introduces some different contents into children's lives. However, in their responses, they do not attribute it the same importance as some of the children.

The relation of religion to the trafficking phenomenon is neglected in he reference materials. Religious norms and rituals are not explored in relation to either the risk they may imply or the protection and resiliency that religion may provide to a child.

Cultural messages in the community

An important cultural norm that children perceive as risky for them is the one saying that nobody should meddle with internal family relations. They feel that there is insufficient assurance that people from their community would be ready to help them in the event that something bad happens to them (e.g. family violence, theft, physical abuse).

I think it would be important if the people from the camp told or reported to the police when they saw something wrong or dangerous happening in some home. If everyone did that all the time, then those people who sell children would have to hide more, and would not be able to do that, and would get arrested. People here prefer to stay quiet and pretend not to know anything, they don't want to meddle in other peoples' lives. They say it's better that way, because that man could be angry and

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[37] Interview with a child (no.11) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 9 July 2006

dangerous, so it's better to mind one's own home. I guess no one wants to have more problems.[38]

Although this norm exists and is highly appreciated, rumours spread fast and easily. The opinion of the community about themselves and their behaviour is important to them, because they are aware that negative opinion may put them at risk of being stigmatized and therefore deprive them of any prospects for the future. If there is talk about a child not behaving in line with the defined norms, s/he loses the support and assistance of his/her family and community. Children see this as a real and serious threat; however, they tend to take all precautions to prevent their prohibited behaviour from being revealed rather than renounce it.

I don't like anyone to see me walking with my boyfriend, everyone would talk about it and they would say I'm a bad girl. And I think that's not right, that I should be called bad just because I walk with my boyfriend. Then that talk would reach my father, and God forbid he should see me, I'd be done for.[39]

Specific cultural characteristics of different groups within the RAE population

Children point out the differences between certain groups in their community and list their characteristics. They have a clear awareness of the existence of diverse groups: Roma, Egyptians, Ashkali, Magjup, Gabel, Cergar, although they cannot entirely distinguish their specific features. The only clear distinction is the one between Roma and Egyptians, mainly with regard to the custom of 'selling the bride'. While Roma sell the bride – the parents choose the husband and ask for a certain amount of money to give her daughter in marriage, Egyptians do not take any money for the bride, although the parents choose the future husband.

Adult community members recognise the differences in norms, lifestyles and adopted habits, especially between Roma and Egyptians. They emphasise as a distinguishing feature the Egyptians' tendency towards security and stable jobs in state agencies, and their different customs related to wedding ceremonies and funerals.

References do not consider such specific social norms in any community, in relation to trafficking or other risks. We realised it was necessary to take into account the specific features of a certain group in order to obtain a clear picture of the community in question.

Social marginalization

I know that people in Montenegro treat us as less important people anyway, and they look down on us and don't like us around them, they only talk to us if we need to do some work where you get soiled and they give us two Euros or only one Euro for

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[38] Interview with a child (no.11) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 9 July 2006
[39] Interview with a child (no.27) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 22 July 2006

that, depends on the person and the work we need to do for them. They are never going to see us as normal ordinary people such as themselves. But I guess that's how it is supposed to be.[40]

Children from the RAE population possess a clear awareness of the being socially isolated and marginalised by the domicile population in Montenegro. They recognise marginalization in the way people treat them – they underestimate, disparage and ignore them, fostering their feeling of being different from the environment and making them feel degraded.

Living in the isolated camp surrounded by a fence, in a space that seems isolated from the rest of the world, reinforces the feeling of alienation and not belonging. The feeling of isolation is enhanced by the children's perception that they do not belong there, and that they are not accepted by their peers from the domicile population. RAE children experience this negative attitude from members of their own people who are domicile in Montenegro.

Children identify being displaced as an additional reason for their stigmatization, because the offensive and rejecting messages they receive from their environment refer also to their status.

Well, they don't like us because we are refugees and because we are Roma. I don't know why we are refugees, as if it were any fault of mine. I didn't want to leave Kosovo or my home, but it had to happen, there was a war going on and it was dangerous. They don't know what it's like when there is a war and bombardments and someone gets killed. Or someone comes and kills your neighbour, and we are all scared then. But they are like that, they show off, as if they were better people than us. [41]

Children respond differently to this position and status. A number of them try to cope with it and resolve it by ignoring the behaviour of people around them. They try not to notice such behaviour and not to react to it. Children feel very hurt by this kind of attitude towards them, which creates the feelings of rage, revolt and anger that often result in a desire and need to confront this attitude. Their reactions can often get them engaged in arguments, fights, and expose them to other types of risk.

Children feel endangered and insecure while begging in the streets, due to people's malicious comments and messages.

I hear things about the town, when I ask someone for 10 cents, they sometimes tell me: "Go and do some work, you Gypsies just beg but you don't want to sweat and work", "You just want things to fall into your lap", and when we show up in cafés and the market and the shops. And I know there are also people who don't drive us

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[40] Interview with a child (no.30) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 30 July 2006
[41] Interview with a child (no.25) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 20 July 2006

off and they say: "Poor people, it's a pity, here's 20 cents". There are all kinds of things, I can tell you, all kinds of people. [42]

Children recognise that stigmatization also relates to the phenomenon of child trafficking as a part of their culture that children, unfamiliar with it, do not recognise in their own community. However, they receive such comments and judgment from the people they meet in the streets while begging. They perceive this as an additional threat.

I heard from people about Gypsies selling their children in town, while I was begging. And I know we don't sell children, we just pay for a wife - that has to be done like that, all of us Gypsies do that.[43]

The feelings of isolation and being completely on their own are enhanced by their awareness that they do not know any "important people". They believe that only such "important people" could help them solve their major problems such as finding work, learning a trade, or practicing some sport. Solving these problems would alleviate their feeling of being isolated and different.

Key informants are quite sensitive to this issue and believe that the RAE population is stigmatized at all levels. They see the attitude of the community towards them as an additional risk for their children, as it prevents them from adapting. They believe that such stigmatization sustains the feeling of not belonging, which constantly communicates to children that they have less chance to make progress. They think that discrimination exists at all levels, starting from the sphere of politics and institutions to the day-to-day interpersonal relationships. They see discrimination as significant and present in all segments of life and work: employment, education, health, social care etc. They are aware of the significance of this discrimination as compared to the interpersonal one, since it is transferred from the top down.

Reference materials acknowledge the existence of discrimination against the RAE population. However, in exploring this discrimination, only the day-to-day interpersonal level is considered, avoiding deeper analysis and investigation of the political, economic, and institutional level. Members of the RAE community identify discrimination against both adults and children, and consider the discrimination present at the macro level as most restricting and risk-generating.

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[42] Interview with a child (no.21) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006
[43] Interview with a child (no.21) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006

Interpersonal level

The interpersonal relationships that a child from the RAE community perceives as important and puts emphasis on, irrespective of their positive or negative aspects are the following:

- Relationships within the family;

- Relationships with peers;

- Partner relationships;

- Relationships with people they perceive as important for their lives;

- Desired relationships that would, if they were a part of their social network, contribute to meeting some of their needs.

Family

Most of the children in this study see the family as emotional and social support that gives them stability, shelter, safety and help. Family has a considerable influence on the way their time is organised and on the adoption of habits and lifestyle. It is important to note that all children share the awareness that their family's protection and support will be available only as long as they behave in line with family expectations, which fully correspond with the cultural and social norms in their community.

We observed the family dynamics based on a clear hierarchy and division of power, roles and responsibilities. Parents have roles of special importance – that of the mother separate from that of the father, with his characteristic dominant role. Children emphasise also the roles of brothers and sisters and extended family.

Children show their attachment to their parents through their readiness to participate in family duties, help their parents and contribute to the well-being of their family, even by taking up work. This attachment is further highlighted in the concern they show for their parents' health; the state of their health most frequently has direct influence on whether the child feels happy and secure or sad and worried.

There are days when my father feels bad, and sometimes mother too. Then I feel very unhappy and sad, because I love my parents very much. When I think something may happen to them and they might die, I lose all my strength and feel sad. It's a wonder that on some days they both feel very bad, and then the next day they feel much better, and then I cheer up and think they may get better.[44]

Parents are recognised as an important source of power in relation to the child's decision-making and behaviour. Children recognise this as an indispensable part of their role and in

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[44] Interview with a child (no.29) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 24 July 2006

most cases accept it without protest, especially concerning important decisions such as school, work and marriage. Children believe that they solve their problems and make their decisions with considerable help and consultations with their parents. Even when they make the decisions themselves, they often take into account what they think their parents expect from them.

I talk to my father about something I want to do and why I want to do it. Then he tells me what he would do if he were in my shoes. Then the next day I consider what he told me, and when I like it or I think he is right about it and it's better that way, then I decide to do that. Father often tells me something and then I don't do what I had in mind to do, because it doesn't seem like a smart or good thing to do. [45]

The father is perceived as the head of the family and an important figure that everyone relies on, regardless of the way he behaves or treats the children. The father's decision about children, even girls, taking up work (begging, searching the trash containers) is important. Sometimes children work instead of their parents, i.e. the father, in order to protect him from humiliation, feeling of inferiority and shame – the current situation and poverty forced them to accept such work as the only way for their family to survive, although that was never the way they lived in Kosovo.

My father used to have a job, he's not used to searching the bins, and he feels ashamed about that, so he sometimes prefers me to go, and I understand that. It's not easy for him to go about the town, he'd never done that before we came to Podgorica; he didn't even start right away, things were very tough for a while and we received more assistance than we do now. [46]

A more common reason why children work is helping the family: they help their parents and take up this type of work without seeing it as abuse or having a negative impact on themselves or their lives. This attitude on the part of children may be explained by their awareness that all family members work and contribute in line with their age. Children mainly perceive this kind of work as their own choice and are aware that it enables them to fulfill their families' expectations. This gives children a sense of fulfillment and a sense of their own worth, and helps them create a more positive image about themselves. In such circumstances, children perceive work as a source of pleasure.

I'm fine - I like doing it. I'm used to doing it, always have been doing it. It's no trouble for me. I like staying in the camp less than that. I walk in the town all day long, sometimes when someone gives me some money I buy myself some juice, and sometimes I even buy a meat-pie. Rarely, though, only from time to time. Then, I

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[45] Interview with a child (no.25) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 20 July 2006
[46] Interview with a child (no.30) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 30 July 2006

know we have to buy bread and live on something, so I know I have to work and help father; he also walks about the town all day long, collecting anything he comes across. It's not easy for him either. I like it when I come home and, if I have collected some money, we can buy things in the shop with it. Mother is pleased then, and I like it when I come home and I can show her how much money I've brought with me.[47]

However, there are parents who give their children the task of providing for their needs, while they do not make any contribution themselves. When children work to provide for their father's needs (such as alcohol), they see that work as negative and feel mistreated, which makes them feel discontent and sad. Such feelings are often accompanied by corporal punishment if they fail to meet the father's needs and expectations. In most cases they perceive such situation and their own position as a risk, and feel a strong desire to search for better life.

I tell you, there are some fathers in this camp who are really bad people and don't do any work all day long and wait for someone to bring them money, and there are those who walk about the town or do manual work all day long to earn ten euros. And that's a lot, if they could make that much every day... The ones who don't do anything or drink and wait for children or even their wife to earn them money and get it from begging from people, they must make their children unhappy, they must be unhappy. Sometimes they even get beaten when they come back from the town with no money or only a little.[48]

When he has a few drinks he shouts at all of us, not just the one who has done something wrong. He blames us all for something then, doesn't do anything but spends what he earns on drinks and leaves us without any food. If it weren't for my brother and me, sometimes we'd have no food for days. Luckily, he doesn't drink every day.[49]

All children attribute great importance to the role of the father in their upbringing, irrespective of the way their father treats them. They think that a father has to have clear requirements concerning children's behaviour and monitor their movement and actions. Children set a clear line between behaviour and its consequences, they know that, if their

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[47] Interview with a child (no.21) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006
[48] Interview with a child (no.29) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 24 July 2006
[49] Interview with a child (no.23) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

behaviour does not comply with the existing norms and expectations, they will consequence will be corporal punishment executed by the father. They accept this measure as a necessary and completely acceptable guidance and a method to ensure that children behave in the desired way. If a father does not act in this way, children see and assess that as his lack of concern and a likelihood that the child will enter risk (engage in fights, theft, crime, trafficking).

We used to go to the father and complain that his son was bothering us, and he does not do anything about it, so then we have to deal with it. Then my two friends and I deal with it immediately. And then my father punishes me, and his father does not punish him, and that's not fair. Because a father has to punish the children when they do wrong. [50]

In addition to expecting a certain form of behaviour from their fathers, children think that it is very important that fathers set a good example to their children by being hard working, honest, taking care of their families and not drinking.

Well, fathers are different. Some father sees what his son does and who he spends time with, and then beats him if does something wrong. Some fathers don't even know what their children do all day. Some drink, so that's why they don't know. Some don't behave well themselves, so then their sons can behave any way they want and go wherever they want and they are no good either. [51]

Children perceive their mothers as the persons who take care of the home and of their well-being. They also perceive that their mothers do not have the same power as their fathers in decision-making, but that their sphere of decision-making pertains only to the matters of home or sometimes work, if the fathers allow it. Girls consider their mothers' influence as important for their decisions and wishes; it is usually manifested in mothers giving them permission to visit friends and go for walks in the camp, which is *a priori* allowed to boys.

I think it all depends on the parents, what they teach their children. If they make them do good, then it's going to be good for the children and for everyone else, and if they let them do whatever they want, that's bad. That's what I think. [52]

The size of the family determines the significant role of siblings in children's lives. If older, they represent support and protection, sometimes a role model and a standard for assessing their own behaviour. When they are younger, their older siblings are responsible for them

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[50] Interview with a child (no.21) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006
[51] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14 – 17, Podgorica – Konik, 8 July 2006
[52] Interview with a child (no.25) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 20 July 2006

and look after them. Looking after and protecting younger brothers and sisters sometimes restrict them in making decisions that would suit their own needs.

When I consider whether to go to swim in the Cijevna, I think of whether to take my brother with me - he likes going there, and I prefer going without him. There, you see, and then I think how he's going to mind me not taking him, and then I consider whether to go alone, so that I don't have to be careful about where my brother is and what he's doing and that he doesn't drown, but can just hang out with my friends. And then I think of him again, and how he'd like to come with me, and so I deliberate. I do the similar thing with other things, whenever I need to decide what to do.[53]

A particularly important aspect of the roles and relations between brothers and sisters is that brothers are assigned to pay attention to their sisters' behaviour. Many brothers believe that they have to mind who their sister spends time with, who her friends are, what kind of persons they are etc. Boys consider this demonstration of concern for their sisters as preventative action, one that protects girls from entering bad company, making wrong judgments about some situations or accepting an offer that may put them at risk. Furthermore, brothers think that this kind of care and supervision of their behaviour and movement will help their sisters fulfill the expectations of the family or community. This way of treating their sisters implies that brothers assume, to an extent, the role of parents, which sisters recognise as important, but also often also restrictive.

I sure do, you bet, everyone who has a sister pays attention to where she goes and who she spends time with. My sisters are not allowed to wander about either; I watch over them, and my older brother who's not married yet, and father and mother too. They stay here in the camp, never go to the town except with us, their brothers, and that very rarely. Why should they go to the town, nothing there to see. And she's fine here and we take care of her.[54]

The extended family is shown as responsible for the child if the child has no parents. Children often mention relatives (uncles, aunts), especially if they live abroad, because they believe that their invitation to come and live with them would give them the opportunity to achieve a better life and escape from their current situation.

I would like my father to get me a passport, so I can go to Italy, to my uncle's. They say life is very nice there. I'd go to him, if father lets me, to live there nicely, walk about, my uncle may find me some work. That would be great. When they came here

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[53] Interview with a child (22) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006
[54] Interview with a child (23) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

last year, my cousin told me about the cities and large, beautiful parks, and lakes and many places to go for walks. Look at this place, just trash and stench.[55]

Adults from this community believe that family has an important role in modeling children's behaviour, and may affect their risk and resiliency. They believe that parents are responsible for a child's well-being, because children have not developed the mechanisms and capacity to adequately assess reality and make good decisions based on their assessment. They believe that the parents' care or lack of care influences children's behaviour. If parents take care of their children and provide them with a sense of security, then children conform to the norms, which constitutes their resiliency. On the other hand, those parents who do not take care of their children expose them to various risks.

First, parents must think, then children must think as well – what does a child know? So it's the parent that has to take care and look after the child, where the child goes and who with. Children who have no parents, or their parents don't take good care of them, those children who fear no one and they may do anything that comes to their mind are more at risk.[56]

The available references identify relationships within the family as very important; the family is perceived as the fundamental system of support and security for the child. Data refers mainly to family-related risks, such as the aspect of dysfunctional relationships, family violence, violence against children, or problematic behaviour of parents (alcoholism etc), confirming that family relationships of this kind pose the biggest risk that a child will be vulnerable to trafficking. The available references do not discuss a wide range of functional aspects of family dynamics and supportive relationships, such as those between siblings or with one of the parents that may indicate a resiliency of children in the community.

Peers

The children in this study described peers as a very important part of their lives and work that may serve as a mechanism for strengthening their resiliency. If the selected peer group possesses some anti-social forms of behaviour (such as stealing, engaging in fights or illegal trade etc), they may present a risk. In this section, we will examine in more detail the relationships with peers and the way children see them.

My friends like me and they tell me all their secrets, lend me a dress or something when I want to be pretty, when I am going for a visit with my mother. I like being friends and spending time with them very much and I want to do that.[57]

For the most part, they organise their free time with their peers. Even though the activities available are very limited, they do not deny the importance and satisfaction they get even

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[55] Interview with a child (24) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006
[56] Interview with a child's mother, Podgorica – Konik, 18 July 2006
[57] Interview with a child (no.19) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 4 July 2006

from such simple and repetitive activities. They compensate for the quality of the contents of these activities and the constraints of their environment by developing close and trusting relationships with their peers.

Well, sometimes I go to town with my friends, for a walk, sometimes we ride a bicycle, sometimes I listen to some music and stay home.[58]

They see peers as very important when attempting to resolve some problems and/or make decisions. They attribute highest importance to sincere and understanding communication. Peers often serve as protection from adults and their expectations, covering up for the behaviour that they see as justified and adults as wrong (e.g. secret dates with a boyfriend, which is strictly prohibited in this community).

I tell you, my friends are pretty and good, I can ask them to help me with anything or give me something I don't have, or to say I went for a walk with them when I was with my boyfriend, not to tell anyone about my boyfriend if we agree, I can tell them all my secrets and they can tell theirs to me.[59]

They describe their relationships with their peers as very important and supporting, full of love and caring. They see their peers as their friends and sometimes even equal them to family, thus emphasizing the level of closeness and trust.

Some friends of mine can help me. When I'm all depressed and I go to them and talk to them, they help me think in a different way, I see that not everything is so black. They can help me because they want and wish to help me, I think they love me, or at least I'd like them to. They praise me and tell me I am good and I'll definitely get a job. They tell me about these other boys who were persistent like me, and they found a job, so I'll find one as well. They talk and fool around a bit, and it all passes.[60]

They make friends mostly with members of the same sex: boys are friends with boys and girls with girls. This results from the strict traditional norms and rules of behaviour, especially concerning girls, who are not supposed to have boys for friends or spend time with them, regardless of the nature of their relationship. However, since the very conditions in which they live lead to contact, such encounters are inevitable.

I say a man cannot be a good friend. It's not likely that a man can be a friend to a girl. He is a good friend at first, and talks to you nicely, and then he starts bothering

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[58] Interview with a child (no.10) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 10 July 2006
[59] Interview with a child (no.24) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006
[60] Interview with a child (no.23) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

you and asking for… all kinds, I can't tell you that. Then he can't be your friend any more. Perhaps it doesn't have always to be that way, but I think it is.[61]

Children believe that they make autonomous decisions about their choice of company. When choosing friends, they consider their behaviour. If they assess somebody's behaviour as risky or unfavourable for them (such as fighting, swearing, dating boys openly, rudeness etc), they avoid their company. They think that if one enters such company, it is very difficult to get out, because of their strong pressure.

Well, my friends are good, hard-working, they like to work, they are honest and I trust them. They'll help me, when I need a favour from them or I have a problem I turn to them first. There are really a lot of good boys here. But there are also some no-good ones who just show off and act as rascals. They don't do anything, they just linger about the camp all day, everyone's fed up with them. They cause trouble, argue with children and everyone. I don't respect them and I don't spend time with them. I may just say hello to them when I come across them. I can't consider anyone who wants someone else to provide him with food either good or honest or smart.[62]

Children also realise that their choice of peers has to be checked and approved by their parents. If the parents do not like their choice of friends, they will try and forbid them to see them. On the one hand, children will obey their judgment and decision and distance themselves from that undesirable company.

I make some decisions, like who I want to be friends with, but if my father saw that the friends I chose were not good persons and behaved badly, then he'd order me not to spend time with them any more, and I 'd have to stop, because you have to obey your father and I don't want to make him angry.[63]

On the other hand, some children will try to prove to their parents that their choice of friends is not risky in any way and will thus try to retain these friendships. However, children say that they usually do not succeed in that, especially when parents consider their choice of friends as extremely bad, dangerous and risky for them.

My mother doesn't know all of my friends as well as I do. So she says this one or that one is not good for me and she doesn't let me be friends with her, and I know this girl better and I know she's a good friend. I think mother can't know them better

[61] Interview with a child (no.24) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006
[62] Interview with a child (no.29) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 24 July 2006
[63] Interview with a child (no.20) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006

than me and I have to know them better. So I often quarrel with her, but she usually has her way.[64]

Peers also represent a major source of support in performing their work, making it easier for children to endure working in the streets. They emphasise the sense of togetherness and being part of a group, which enhances their feeling of being safe, especially from members of other groups or the children who are a potential threat and whom they wish to avoid.

Well when it's cold and it's winter, it's even more difficult for him than for me. We spend the whole day in the street, moving from one place to the next, sometimes we fool around and tell jokes while we work to make the day nicer and have some fun. The truth is that you get tired and stand on your feet all day, and then you go and ask, beg people to give you something.[65]

Children also notice that there are some violent peers in the camp, always boys. According to them, they hang out all day long, behave in a problematic way and are aggressive towards others: fight, swear, make offensive comments, and steal. Children think that, since they live in such a restricted area, they cannot avoid these violent peers and that this threat is constant. However, children use different ways to keep away from them, or, if they are in a bigger group, sometimes directly confront them.

There are four of us and there are maybe ten of them and they keep swearing all the time, so you can't stand it and you have to get even. That's how we started swearing as well and sometimes we fight as well.[66]

Girls acutely feel the threat of such violent behaviour of men, fearing that they may be mistreated and abused, even raped.

There are also boys here in the camp that I feel afraid of sometimes, and I don't like being around them. These boys like to tell girls all kinds of ugly things and to bother them. These boys are no good and they keep causing problems with the people in the camp. You have no idea what kind of boys you can come across in the camp or in the town who'd do anything to a girl. Anything – beat them up, rape them, and then that girl is ruined, practically no one can help her. But that happens rarely.[67]

Boys associate the risk from violent peers with not being capable to resist various pressures coming from such peers and in being forced to join them in various activities very risky for them.

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[64] Interview with a child (no.11) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 9 July 2006
[65] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14 – 17, 11 July 2006
[66] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14-17, Podgorica – Konik, 8 July 2006
[67] Interview with a child (19) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 4 July 2006

The hell it depends on you – when they get hold of you and involve you in their business, they don't let you out. It's hard to get out, they don't let you, they torture you, tell you you're worth nothing, you're a coward, you're afraid of everything, and, of course, some can't put up with that and they join them to prove themselves. And there are some boys who can hardly wait to meet boys like that and do all kinds of things with them. There are all kinds, and I know it's difficult to resist them because sometimes they may follow you for days, if only they decide so, and bother you and tease and provoke you so that you give in. Sometimes it's a game to them, not just a way to earn money.[68]

Adult respondents from this community think that peers are very important and that they exert a significant influence over children's behaviour. The choice of peers may expose a child to risk, if they do not comply with the norms. They also believe that peer relations can provide support and a high degree of resiliency to children, but only if the peer group practices positive forms of behaviour. It is very important for them who their children's friends are; children also recognise this as very important, although sometimes they do not comply with their parents' opinion and choice.

The quality of the environment and the atmosphere, as well as the peers that children are surrounded with are of considerable importance and influence. If someone spends the whole day with some people who have nothing nice in their behaviour to offer to that child, then the child must get corrupted and be as bad as them.[69]

Studies do not include an analysis of the impact of peer relationships on risk and resiliency to trafficking. It is necessary to emphasise that relationships with peers are very important in children's lives and their various aspects need to be further explored, as was done for the purpose of this research. It proved necessary to get a proper understanding of the lives of children in a certain community, in order to utilize the resiliencies provided by the peer group.

Intimate partner relationships

Intimate partner relationships are perceived by the child respondents as very important relationships to which they devote considerable time and attention. Girls enter such relationships quickly, but in secrecy, because they are not socially acceptable and imply a big risk. According to their norms, a girl is not allowed to go out freely or have any intimate partner relationships before marriage.

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[68] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14-17, Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006
[69] Interview with education assistant in the camp, Podgorica – Konik, 28 July 2006

Children are aware of the fact that, as soon as their parents discover or notice some signs that a girl is attracting boys (with her appearance or behaviour) or starting to date, they immediately take the steps to find her a husband. It is believed that the parents, who are concerned about the girl, choose this as a means of preventing her from making wrong judgments and choices that would result in risky or forbidden behaviour, which would, in turn, cause her to lose the support of her family and the community. Many girls are aware of the norms of behaviour and their parents' expectations, the restrictions and bans related to the freedom of movement and entering intimate partner relationships, and the punishment they may face if that violation of the expected forms of behaviour is revealed. In spite of this, many girls still decide to have secret intimate partner relationships, aware, to a bigger or smaller extent that it may leave them vulnerable to manipulation and abuse by the partner. Such a situation may result in their being abandoned by their family or isolated and rejected by the community.

Well, that she's the prettiest one, that he loves her only. She believes him, then they have sex, and he leaves her, and then her father has to throw her out onto the street because he can no longer find her a husband. He says she has disgraced him. Nobody wants her because she is totally ruined. When she is out on the street we are not allowed to help her, she has no one. Her uncle or aunt or anyone else from her family can't take her.[70]

Boys and girls have a clear picture of male predominance in intimate partner relationships. The socio-cultural norms grant the man more power in these relationships as well. In different ways and to different extent, girls develop some forms of behaviour to obtain as much space as possible and better chances for themselves, within these relationships and in overall life and work. Since the community is quite closed and rests on patriarchal relationships, the steps towards alternative behaviour that the girls make are rather small, assessed as risky and always strictly punished.

I can – I leave the camp and walk about a little, and I see my boyfriend, I tell you. I tell something else to my mother and go with my crowd or sometimes with them and my boyfriend together. But, I tell you, if my father and mother found out, I would be done for, I couldn't go back home. Sure, I tell you, I swear, I'm not lying to you. I know they'd throw me out of the house onto the street.[71]

Children notice that the community condemns even a desire for change expressed by a girl and interprets it as a negative aspiration that challenges the traditional, predictable, known and safe pattern of relations. The community sees a girl's desire for change as deviant behaviour, and quickly takes "action" to bring things back to "normal". Some girls do not accept this pattern and fight for the power to make independent decisions and have more

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[70] Interview with a child (no.24) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006
[71] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 13 – 16, Podgorica – Konik, 28 July 2006

freedom. They see this fight as a possible risk - not because their behaviour is risky, but because it is not accepted by the community and does not comply with the norms.

I don't like not being allowed to walk with my friends anywhere else except the camp. I don't like not being allowed to have a boyfriend either, we can't walk around here and talk – if father and mother knew, they'd kill me. I don't like having to lie and hide. And I am old enough to have a boyfriend, I don't like to have a husband, but I must have a boyfriend.[72]

Although they cherish tradition and customs, adults from the RAE community are aware of and recognise the inevitability of various changes taking place in the wider context, which their community cannot avoid facing. They show a rigid attitude concerning intimate partner relationships before marriage, especially for a girl, s well as concerning adopted habits and lifestyle. They emphasise that it is difficult for them, as adults who are responsible for guidance and success of children, to find the right balance between necessary changes and preserving and cherishing all the values specific for their culture and tradition. They think that the right balance between these two options is of essential and critical importance. They point out that their community is a relatively closed one, with its recognizable specific features, and has functioned well as such because it is based on the established and accepted norms. This is why they find it difficult to integrate and accept the changes coming from the outside world. They are very concerned about numerous bad examples that children from their community may take as a model and thus enter into risk. In spite of the changes taking place in their environment, they feel it is necessary to go on cherishing and insisting on observing their specific socio-cultural norms. They expect their children to observe those norms and see that as a resiliency for children from their community.

References mention the ritual and custom of "selling the bride" among the RAE population, without further exploring intimate partner relationships. They also indicate that, due to the rigid traditional norms, intimate partner relationships may be very risky for children (especially for girls).

Other important relationships

There are persons that children mention and perceive as a very important part and aspect of their life. Those persons are: teachers (if children go to school), other parents, and members of the domicile population.

If children attend school, their relationships with their teachers, male or female, are very important to them. This relationship may motivate them to go to school, and if it abounds in support and praise it fosters the feeling of efficiency and a positive attitude to school. However, if children are ignored, they give up on school and education quickly and easily.

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[72] Interview with a child (no.24) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006

I like it when my teacher says I am smart and I can go to big schools. When she gives me praise like that and says I'm good, I study even more.[73]

That was a good day and the teacher was good, but then the teacher went to another school and I wanted to go only to his class and so I no longer wanted to go. And I felt bad when I stopped going to school. I liked going to school and I liked the teacher a lot. Because he was good and that's why I wouldn't go to anyone else's class, so I stopped going to school.[74]

The opinion of other parents is also important for their feeling of their own worth; it is especially motivating for children when other parents praise them or take them as an example of desirable behaviour and lifestyle.

When I hear that my friend's mother likes him to be friends with me, then I feel content.[75]

Most children have daily contact with the domicile population of Montenegro, due to their work in the streets of Podgorica. Their responses show that they are aware that there exist different kinds of people, who can be kind or unpleasant to them. They recognise the attitude in benevolent way of address and in partial understanding of their position, which gives them a pleasant feeling and they consider such people good. If, however, they receive remarks, criticism, objections, or are driven off the street or out of some facility, they perceive that as unpleasant and consider those people bad and malevolent.

You see, there are people who are not good to us: some ten days ago a man almost broke my friend's arm. We were begging at the junction, and this guy hit this friend of mine that I often beg with, with a bottle. There are many such idiots, and this man was drunk too.[76]

In addition to the support within the family, adult members of the community think that children in the RAE community need to receive some external support and commitment from the adults working with this population. They think that these children do not have enough positive and quality contacts, or sufficient knowledge and information. For this reason, they believe it would be very motivating and supportive to develop and raise awareness and provide information regarding the options available to them in reality. This approach is necessary, because they think these children need support and motivation to make them feel more satisfied with themselves, respected and special, which would improve their resiliency and reduce the risk.

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[73] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14-17, Podgorica – Konik, 6 July 2006
[74] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14-17, Podgorica – Konik, 8 July 2006
[75] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14-17, Podgorica – Konik, 6 July 2006
[76] Interview with a child (no.21) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006

Children are in the streets all day every day. There are no adequate programmes for children, some people who would help start an Internet club, for example. That would be of great importance for the children, they would learn and master important data. If someone implemented programmes that would prepare and enable youth for some concrete jobs and/or trades.[77]

The available references do not examine the risk and resiliency attached to the structure and specific characteristics of these relationships that children establish outside their families and peer groups.

Desired relationships

Children think that they need to know more people who would be important for the accomplishment of their plans. They state that they lack such acquaintances and opportunity to forge relationships with them. The people they wish and aim to have contact with are those who could teach them some trade, train them in some sports, or find them a job. Establishing such contact is rendered more difficult by the perception of being socially marginalised by the society, and the message that they identify as the one they get from important institutions – that the institutions do not care about them in the proper way, the way they need them to.

It would be very good if we had contact with people that we could have some benefit from or they could do something for us or help us. If you wish to get a job, you have to connect with someone and ask them to help you. So I think, being in contact with people so they help you when you really need it.[78]

Adults from the RAE population think that people who could provide some useful, concrete and practical contents for children would be very important and needed in order to make an essential change in the life of the children and the community. At the same time, they emphasise the fact that they are aware that neither institutions nor important people provide help to these children in the way that is needed. They state that children's awareness that they are on their own and that nobody wants to help them is an additional risk for children in their community, who are faced with the fact that they lack the capacity to accomplish their wishes and ambitions.

Each activity that people from the state system have taken or supported related to the Roma population has favoured further isolation and keeping the Roma people away from the citizens of Montenegro. The Ministry of Education, together with the Commissariat for Refugees and some other international humanitarian organizations wanted very much to educate Roma children and they started a school for non-formal

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[77] Interview with the coordinator of the NGO "Association of Roma and Egyptians Displaced Persons from Kosovo", Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006
[78] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14-17, Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

education and literacy courses in the camp. I just want to point out that this kept our children isolated, with a strong feeling of being discriminated. Because our children are not stupid and they see and feel everything.[79]

Reference materials most frequently list the activities implemented by different organizations with and for the RAE population. Some changes are identified; however, it is evident that the activities have not had the effect that children and adults recognise as concrete and essential help.

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[79] Interview with the coordinator of the NGO "Association of Roma and Egyptians Displaced Persons from Kosovo", Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

Individual level

After analyzing the data obtained from the children's responses, the following categories are identified for the individual level:

- Sex;

- Age;

- Personality characteristics;

- Certain skills and knowledge;

- Education;

- Decision-making;

- Hopes and dreams.

Sex

In the previous chapters we presented the children's perception of the cultural construction of gender and the way this is conveyed in the course of their upbringing, by means of the influence exerted by the parents, immediate and broader environment. Children state that, with regard to sex, different roles and responsibilities are clearly defined. More rigid, stricter norms apply to girls' behaviour, but they are assigned less responsibility; the norms for boys are not as rigid or strict, but their position implies more responsibility. The domain where girls are active and have a say in decision-making relates specifically to the family setting, the relationships in the family and their personal behaviour, in line with the specified expected and desirable behaviour. Boys are allowed greater freedom of movement, and therefore more freedom in decision-making, although other people exert either direct or indirect influenced on most of their decisions.

Children realise that girls are more exposed to various influences and other people that may hurt them. For this reason, their movement is restricted - they believe that, for the family, this represents a system to take care of girls and protect them from various risks.

I used to go to school, but now I no longer go because mother thinks I may hear and see something bad there and then start doing it myself. That I may come across some bad boys, who'd deceive me. So I no longer go to school, but I don't think the same as mother.[80]

Most girls accept and observe this role. However, such rigid norms may cause some girls to behave according to what they want instead to what is expected of them (e.g. walk about the camp freely, go to town, use make up, talk freely and spend time with boys). Any digression from what is allowed may put them at risk, which the children interpret as a personal choice. Children are aware that, if a girl does not behave in line with the norms (e.g. walks freely in

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[80] Interview with a child (no.26) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 20 July 2006

the camp or the town, breaking the norm of restricted freedom of movement) she can expect to be threatened and endangered, which may take the form of verbal abuse and other forms of mistreatment such as rape.

And about girls – I think it is dangerous for them anywhere and they shouldn't walk alone, especially not in the town, because something bad will happen to them immediately and boys will start approaching them and telling them all kinds of things.[81]

Children's responses emphasise that work and earning money are largely set as expectations for boys. This expectation and responsibility assigned to boys related to providing help and support to the survival of the family may be risky, because the desire to earn more money and attain better life for the family may incite them to take up, if such an opportunity arises, an offer to achieve and meet these expectations somewhere else.

Children perceive dangers as clearly divided by sex: girls are in danger of becoming victims, i.e. abused by another party (especially a man, but also the community), while risky behaviour usually leads boys into criminal actions (theft, fighting etc).

Adults believe that both boys and girls are at risk, considering that their living conditions do not provide any prospects for a better and different life. The risks for girls are bigger, in the sense of their being abused and attacked by others. They support the current cultural model, which they see as the only one possible, and which implies restricted freedom of movement and girls being attached to home and doing house work. The risk that adults identify for boys is that they may succumb to the influence of their peers and the desire for more certainty and engage in risky activities such as theft or resale of stolen goods that may enable them to earn more money faster. Their culture, particularly that of Egyptians, emphasises the importance of work; they desire stable and reliable jobs, but do not identify any opportunities to get such jobs in their environment.

They are aware and they know as much, that it's almost impossible to find a stable and permanent job to provide them the conditions for living. How can they get a job? And when someone is hungry, they can't endure, so what is going to become of those young people, what can you expect from them? How long can they endure that for without entering the risks I am talking about?

So, the natural course of things is the option of risks: beg, steal, become criminals, prostitutes.[82]

According to the reports issued by local NGOs ("Safe Women's House" and "Montenegrin Women's Lobby"), more women victims than men are involved in trafficking. This is explained by the imbalance of power between women and men. They consider that, in order to

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[81] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 13-16, Podgorica – Konik, 13 July 2006
[82] Interview with a leader of Roma and Egyptians IDPs from Kosovo, Podgorica – Konik, 28 July 2006

change their position, girls may choose risky alternatives that would bring them independence. This opinion confirms children's views related to gender-related risks.

However, the influence of such gender roles for boys and the possibility that their role and responsibility in providing financial means may put them at risk are neglected.

Age

Children's responses show that age, together with sex, is perceived as a risk. For girls, this 'risky' age is the onset of puberty (11,12 years of age). At this time girls become aware of their position as women, they assess and perceive themselves through the way men perceive them and the relationships they established with men. Children think that, when parents notice that girls are developing or may begin to develop an interest in intimate partner relationships, they introduce drastic restrictions of their freedom of movement, including going to school. Children perceive this reaction of the parents as justified and protective, with regard to the possible influences and contacts that may take place somewhere, on their way to school, in school or in town. Girls say they have the need to make friends and experiment in intimate partner relationships, instead of just waiting passively for the day when they will get married.

Children's responses show that children clearly realise that age is connected with some risks. They think that child labour is a greater risk for smaller children, who are unable to defend themselves and can get hurt more easily, while the risk for the older ones lies in different decisions and risky choices that they may be offered, in the absence of some certain chances.

The expectations of key informants related to age depend on the sex. They think that girls are not at risk before they reach the age of 11 or 12, but that after this age they are very susceptible to risks and influences, if they move outside their family and home. They think that at this age girls become more interested in the outside world, and especially men, and they use this to justify greater control of girls by adults, who protect them.

When this kind of restriction of freedom is established for a certain age, at the developmental level, which is characterized by the need to experiment and explore reality, it may prove risky. Such restriction of freedom prevents girls from developing internal mechanisms that would enable them to consider certain situations or offers in a clearer and more realistic light, and make their own independent judgment of them. Therefore, although this approach represents a resiliency from the cultural and educational perspective, it may represent a risk if considered from the perspective of the child's development potentials.

In the research titled "Nobody's Children" (Žegarac, 2005), the age factor is considered and analyzed in relation to children's vulnerability to trafficking. This research presents age as a broad category as well as various influences and offers that children may "succumb to", depending on age. It is stated that girls aged 16 to 18 are more at risk of sexual exploitation - this cannot be valid for the RAE population, because they introduce preventative action at the age of 11/12 and restrict girls' movement precisely in response to the potential risk of such exploitation. Children may be exploited for the purpose of work – considering that child labour is accepted by the community as a form of survival, children may get trafficked at an early age, because such work is expected for this group of children.

Characteristics and skills

Children see some personality characteristics and certain forms of behaviour as resiliency factors. If they manage to identify activities that suit their competencies, they feel confident and efficient performing them and assess that this protects them from various risks. The activities they identified in their responses were: painting, sports, music, spending organised time with their friends.

This is important, when I started doing something, drawing on my own, when I no longer went to school I started learning to draw on my own and I taught myself how to draw.[83]

They think that being "smart" is also a resiliency factor, since a smart child is better able to assess a situation.

I really don't like to fight, and I try very hard not to get into a fight. I often stay quiet when someone tells me something degrading; I try to act as if I never heard it. I have talked a lot about this with my friends, that it's a matter of intelligence, and we should not fall for their cheap tricks, you can get provoked wherever you go. However, there were times when we got into a fight, but they were rare. Sometimes I can put up with so much without feeling bad, and then I feel content with myself much more than when I give in to their pressure and get into a fight.[84]

Some forms of behaviour, such as fighting and conflicts with others, are seen as a risk related to identifying themselves with bad company that will lead them into some risky and criminal activities.

The assessment of physical abilities is connected with the feeling of safety or lack of safety. If they perceive themselves as physically inferior (e.g. weak), they avoid conflicts. However, this does not mean they are not potentially at risk, because precisely such children, in their view, are more susceptible to pressures and more exposed to possible manipulations.

They consider that it is very valuable to have knowledge or skills related to some trade, which they believe could ensure a more certain future. They point out that they do not have such skills and knowledge, which reduces their chances to find a stable job. Therefore, they clearly state in their responses that their only choices in securing survival are "searching the containers", begging or stealing.

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[83] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14 -17, Podgorica – Konik, 8 July 2006
[84] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14 -17, Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006

Well, I'd like to have a job. Then I wouldn't go and search the bins. It's better to work than to steal. I don't like to steal, I never steal. How can I find a job – that's impossible, I can't do anything, I didn't go to school, I don't know a trade.[85]

Adults from this community emphasise that an adequate way to protect children from different risks would be to provide them eith practical training for some trades. Since such opportunities are not available to them at the moment, key informants think that families invest a lot of effort to keep them on the right track. They connect children's characteristics and behaviour with the way they were brought up by their families, but also emphasise that the negative influence of their peers in the camp may play a crucial part in the development of some inadequate, criminal behaviour and characteristics.

The reference materials available do not analyze skills, behaviour or characteristics of children in relation to the risk of trafficking. The reason for this may be the wish not to stigmatize some children additionally and make wrong judgments about some people.

It is, however, necessary, when implementing programmes of prevention, to pay attention to what children say about desirable characteristics, and especially skills, that could be adequately supported in order to strengthen their resiliency.

Education

Education is most frequently considered as a resiliency factor. Children, regardless of whether they attend school or not, emphasise knowledge and education as an important factor that may provide them with better chances and more reliable options for a better and happier life. Children are aware that if they are educated and complete school or learn a trade, they will have better chances to find better and more stable jobs and salaries, and therefore financial-economic security for themselves and their families. This is one of their most important problems and sources of insecurity and fear, as well as hopes and dreams. In many of their responses, children emphasise their concern about financial security, aware of the limited and slim chances of finding a job if they do not complete school or learn a trade.

I think the one who goes to school is more protected and everything is less dangerous for him, because he sees and understands better, and avoids danger. And another thing that protects him is that he hasn't much time to hang around, but has to study, so he is not so much in the sight of those who would tease or attack him. I think going to school is very good. [86]

A difference is identified between children who attend school and those who do not. Those who go to school perceive themselves as different, which is manifested in their different interests and the way they spend their time. They see that as a positive thing and have a developed sense of self-respect and self-efficacy, which they believe increases their resiliency to different challenges and risks.

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[85] Interview with a child (no.10) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 10 July 2006
[86] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 13 -16, Podgorica – Konik, 13 July 2006

Since I started going to school, everything's changed. I come from school after having studied and the others who don't go to school have just been walking around the camp and I have been studying everything I need for school. I started talking to my friends about school and how one day I would finish school and get a job. So we talked about everything, about life and us. I am different from the ones who don't go to school. I like different stuff and I don't like to swear and fight like they do.[87]

Adults from the RAE community considerably value education and think that it would provide children with better and more reliable options. They also believe that, in order to concern themselves with their children's education, orient them in that direction instead of sending them to work, parents need to be provided with a more stable existence and opportunities for work. Key informants explain the significant number of children who do not attend school primarily by the socio-economic position of the family, at the same time not denying the influence of culture on some parents' readiness and motivation to send their children to school.

The UNICEF/CRNVO report from 2003 states that children of poorer socio-economic status show a tendency not to attend or drop out of school. this refers primarily to children from the RAE population, who work to help their families. Projects focused on motivating these children to attend school are currently being implemented in Montenegro, considering that education is an important resiliency factor. It is necessary to determine the best way to provide education, as well as what specific kind would be most suitable and at what age, so that children feel more efficient and education contributes to their better and safer life in the future.

Decision-making

Most children think that parents, that is fathers, make all the important decisions. Children have to accept those decisions. They identify independent decision-making by children only in the domain of everyday decisions such as choice of clothes to wear, choice of housework, although this all complies with the existing norms of expected behaviour. Even when making such "simple" decisions, children emphasise that they take into account or consider the needs and requests of others (e.g. norms, parents, peers). Sometimes, when making independent decisions, they consider possible reactions of the people who are important or close to them.

We are all here together and we need to do everything together. I can't not help when I see my mother needs help, and even if she did not ask me to help her, I'd come of

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[87] Focus group with children from the RAE population aged 14 -17, Podgorica – Konik, 8 July 2006

my own will to work together with her. When there isn't much to do in the house, I am free to do nothing.[88]

I can, and I do make decisions without them, but I always think about them and my agreements, or if I know that something is very important to them and I can help with my decision, I always do that.[89]

Children make their own decisions related to work; however, they are always influenced by others or by the well-being of the family, which is their top priority. They know that their working contributes to the family budget and complies with the expectations and wishes of their fathers, which they do not wish to let down, so when those expectations are met, they feel more satisfied with themselves and more fulfilled.

If I agree with father that we have to go search for things in the town the next day, I try to go to the town and earn some money, instead of going for a swim in the Cijevna, which I like better. So, although I decide, I think about them when I decide. So now I don't know whether I decide myself or not.[90]

They believe there is not much choice as to the type of work they can engage in to support the family. The choices they identify and make, driven primarily by the imperative of survival, are: searching the bins, begging or manual labour. When they earn some money, they feel satisfied and efficient and inevitably assess the decision to work and earn money as a good and successful one.

Well, starting from when to get up in the morning, what to wear, then whether to go to the market or in front of the "Nikic" building – that's the place where manual workers wait for someone to hire them and give them work. When I decide where to go, I decide, as always, that if some unknown man, someone I haven't worked for, hires me, I would do some hard and honest work so he remembers me and hires me again. And he may also recommend me to others. So I decide all the time to be hard working and give my best. When I come back home, I decide what to do for the rest of the day, sleep or spend time with friends.[91]

Children make independent decisions concerning intimate partner relationships, especially girls. However, everything is done in secrecy, because revealing the secret about their dating would imply that the expected norms have been violated, which would put the girl at risk of being thrown out onto the street, rejected by everyone, both her family and the community. Although they are aware of the consequences of their decisions related to intimate partner

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[88] Interview with a child (no.20) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006
[89] Interview with a child (no.20) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006
[90] Interview with a child (no.30) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 30 July 2006
[91] Interview with a child (no.29) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 24 July 2006

relationships, they still make those decisions, convinced that they would not be discovered. It is necessary to add that most of the boys also observe this rule of "secrecy" and thus protect the girls they meet with, although aware that they would not suffer any consequences themselves in these matters, since there are fewer restrictions for them and they are allowed more freedom.

Yes I can, I leave the camp and stroll around a little, and, I've told you, I see my boyfriend. I lie to my mother and leave with my friends or sometimes with my boyfriend and my friends all together. But, I tell you, if my father and mother learned about that, I'd be in huge trouble, I wouldn't dare go back home, you bet, I swear to you that's what would happen, I'm not lying to you. I'm sure they would kick me out of the house onto the street. That's what happened when a friend of mine was seen with a boyfriend - her father beat her up so bad, she had to promise she'd never see him again. Her father told her, if he saw her once again he'd kick her out of the house, that's what would happen. And my friend also knows that's what would happen. She knows her father would beat her and throw her out on the street if he saw her with the boyfriend just one more time. She promised him she wouldn't see him again, but she can't endure and she sneaks out for brief meetings with him, so no one knows. She is so afraid of her mother of father seeing her, because she knows what would happen to her. [92]

Although children are aware of different options, they consider the explicit or implicit requests of their families as priority; therefore, after they consider the family situation and the need to survive, they make an "independent" decision to work. In most cases, they are aware that this decision deprives them of some activity that would be more satisfying to them, but the feeling of satisfaction when they bring home the money they have earned usually serves as compensation for this.

No way, how can I spend time the way I want, I have to help my father and brother. It wouldn't be fair if I did only what I wanted and just went for walks with my crowd and played football. My father doesn't make me work, but I want to help.[93]

 Adults from this community think that upbringing and family determine the way an individual child makes decisions. They believe that the decisions important for the child are made by the parents, for example whether a child is to work, attend school, how they spend their time, whether they move, who they marry etc. They believe that children have very little influence on decision-making, which is why they may get manipulated, deceived or abused

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[92] Interview with a child (no.24) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006
[93] Interview with a child (no.6) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 9 July 2006

by an adult. They see the influence that adults have on a child's decisions as prevention against the child entering some risk due to his/her wrong judgment and decision.

References materials available do not pay attention to children's decision-making and to other people's influence on their decisions. The "Nobody's Children" (Zegarac, 2005) study only emphasises the point that their desire to have a better life or earn money fast may serve as one of the motives to enter risk. Children's responses show that they are aware of the way they make their decisions, as well as what people influence them and how.

Hopes and dreams

Children's hopes and dreams are related to: education, career, traveling to a 'better' place, possibility of a better life, sports, possibility of independent choice, stable job, regular salary, own home, marriage, having children, space for praying.

I used to imagine I was a nurse, dressing wounds. I know it's impossible, since I didn't go to school. I can hardly find any work, so I think it's most important for me to find a good husband, a good man who will work and earn money and not like some wretches who just wander about the town and don't take care of their wife and children. If only I were so lucky to find a good husband, have a nice house and children.[94]

As far as education is concerned, they dream of the professions that require a certain level of education, at the same time aware that they cannot attain that level, especially if they do not attend school. Since health is assigned supreme value and seen as a priority for feeling satisfied, the professions they desire and dream about are those related to improving health and caring for the sick, such as those of a nurse or a doctor.

The type of profession they see as important and aim for, especially if involved in the education process and feeling different and special for that, is that of a teacher.More realistic hopes relate to mastering a trade that would provide them concrete, stable job and income.

Their hopes and dreams include picturing a different space where they would have a better life and would be able to satisfy their needs and desires, which often makes them consider moving or going to a different place.

I would like my father to get me a passport, so I can go to Italy, to my uncle's. They say life is very nice there. I'd go to him, if father lets me, to live there nicely, walk about, my uncle may find me some work. That would be great. When they came here

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[94] Interview with a child (no.19) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 4 July 2006

last year, my cousin told me about the cities and large, beautiful parks, and lakes and many places to go for walks. Look at this place, just trash and stench.[95]

The most striking and all-pervasive hopes of boys elaborate the possibility of finding a job and earning money in order to be able to build a house and create the conditions to start a family. Girls associate the hope and desire to start a family of their own with marrying well.

We talk about how we're all going to have nice lives, good husbands, nice homes and children. We feel cheerful and happy then.[96]

I thought I'd work for some ten years, work hard all day long to earn money to build a nice house for myself. And to have some money left to buy all the things that are needed in a house, nice furniture and things. Get married and live well. There, those are my wishes.[97]

Adults from this community think that the current environment provides children with no opportunities; they feel concerned about the children's desire to go to another country, where they imagine they would have a better life. They think that such an unverified and strongly desired option may be risky for the children and very tempting for the people involved in trafficking in human beings.

Look at the facts – those are children who, on one hand, have no adequate identification documents, no papers, no education, no school, while, on the other hand, they wish to go abroad. So, the only way for them is to travel illegally. Most Roma have gone abroad illegally. When they get there, they have no work, and they have to live on something; they fight to live and survive. They are at risk of trafficking, either for the purpose of prostitution or for forced labour, begging and stealing.[98]

In the reference materials, children's hopes and dreams are presented through their desire and aspiration for a better and more certain future somewhere else, mostly in the Western countries. Modern media and stories told by the people who have lived abroad about better prospects foster children's desire to go abroad (Žegarac, 2005). People involved in child trafficking use such circumstances - this corresponds with the opinion of adult members of the RAE population. On the other hand, children explain their wish primarily by stating that they want to provide the conditions to start a family of their own, and see going abroad as only one way to accomplish that.

Children of the RAE population of displaced persons from Kosovo

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[95] Interview with a child (no.24), Podgorica – Konik, 11 July 2006
[96] Interview with a child (no.20) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 2 July 2006
[97] Interview with a child (no.23) from the RAE population, Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006
[98] Interview with the coordinator of the NGO "Association of Roma and Egyptians Displaced Persons from Kosovo", Podgorica – Konik, 17 July 2006

Children's responses are organised according to the three levels of their perception and functioning: macro, interpersonal and individual. Within the three levels, certain categories are distinguished that we will present in the form of diagrams, which will highlight the multiple influences on the child's decision-making, risk and resiliency.

Diagram 7: Macro level
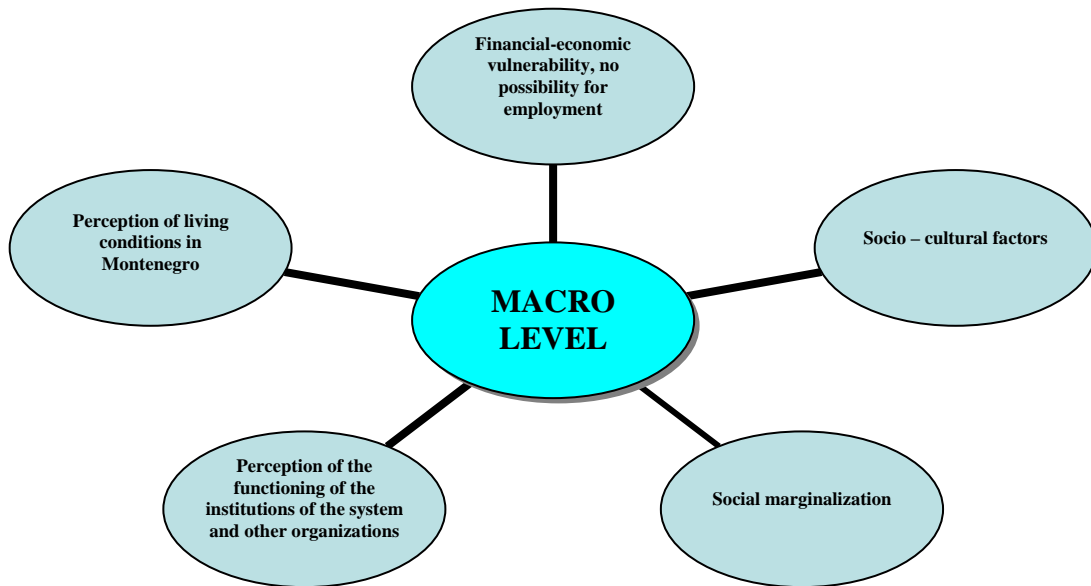
Diagram 8: Interpersonal level
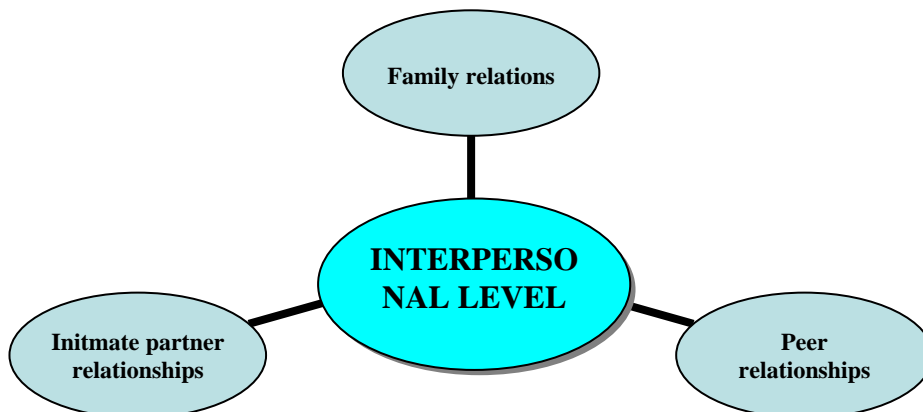
Diagram 9: Individual level
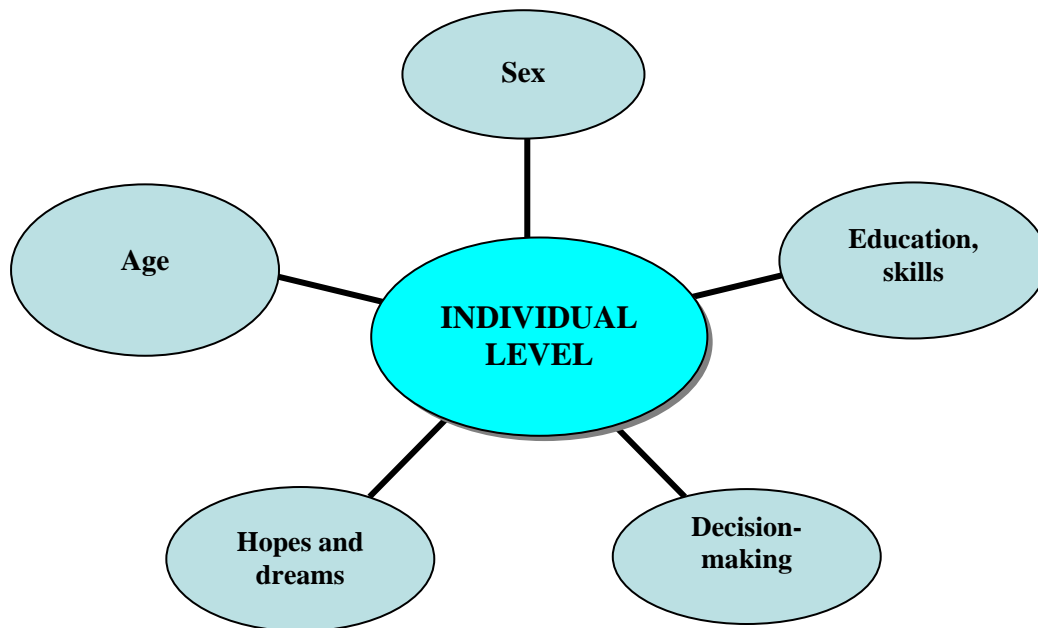
Below, we will present a diagram that presents the child's position in relation to influences generated at all three levels (macro, interpersonal and individual). We will show the child's perspective on the influences and network of responses to risk, resiliency and decision-making from all three levels. The analysis of children's responses showed the significant influence and constant interplay of these levels; it also showed that children's risk and resiliency could not be influenced by any single isolated factor. The diagrams presented here only illustrate previous in-depth qualitative analysis of children's responses. We aimed for the diagrams to highlight the diverse risks and the one-sided perspective on them in the available reference materials and among key informants.
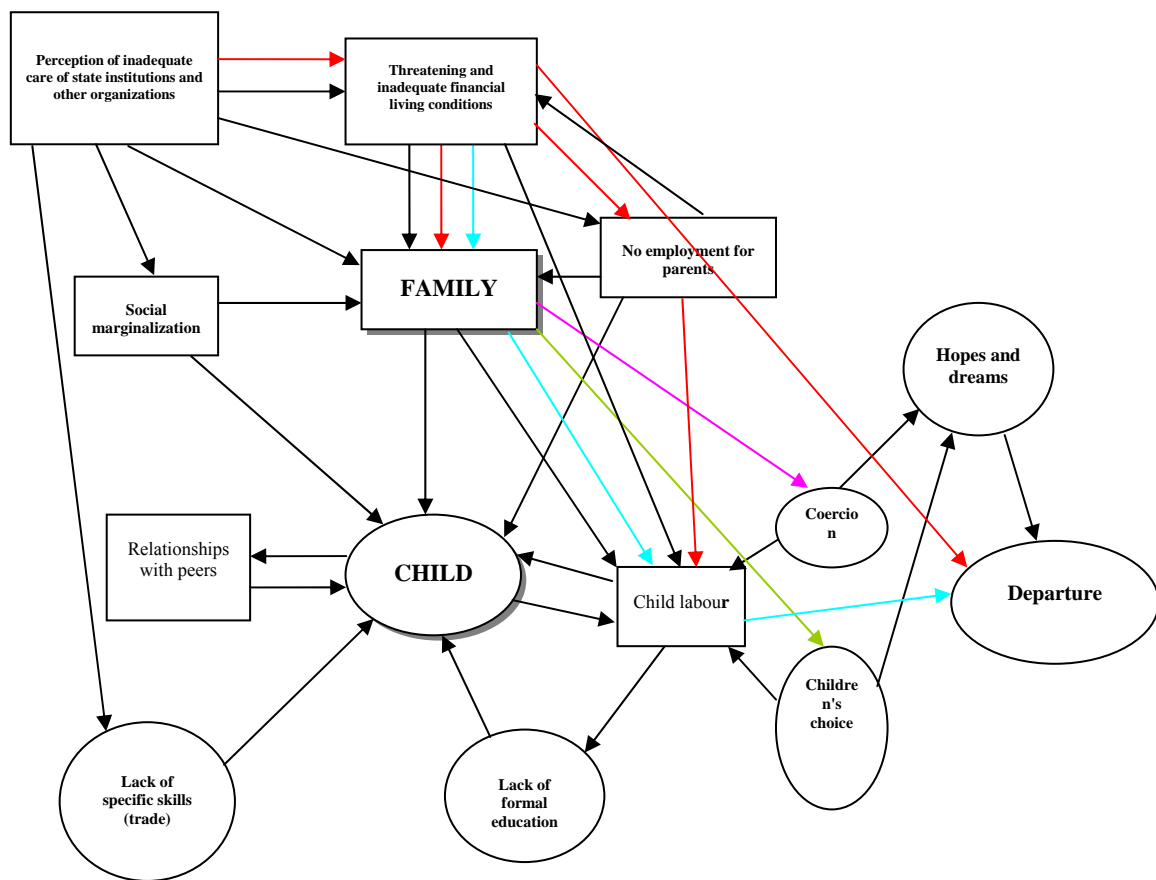
Diagram 10: Network of relationships and influences related to a child from the RAE population, from the perspective of the child, adult and references.

➜ Child's view of own capacities

➜ Risk for RAE children according to key informants

➜ Risk for RAE children according to the available references

▪ Child's view of risk in relation to given segments

▪ Child's view of resiliency in relation to given segments
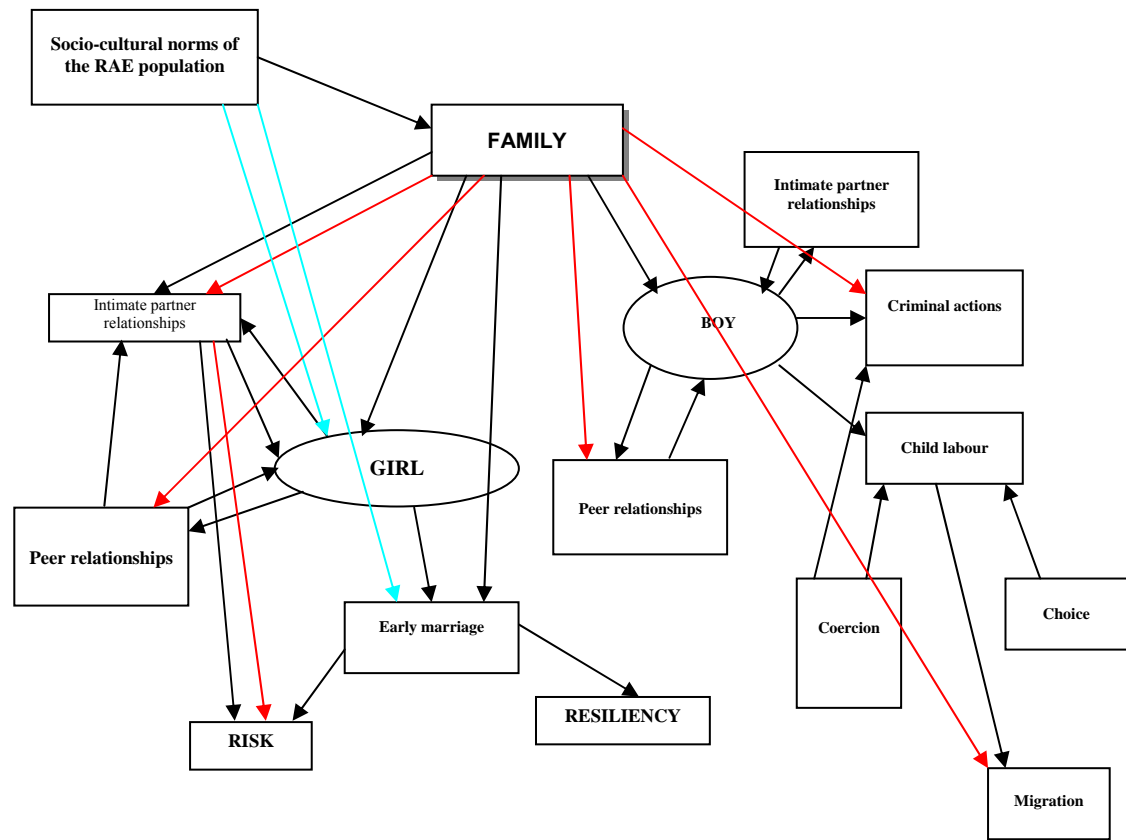
Diagram 11: Network of relationships and influences related to a child from the RAE population, from the perspective of the child, adult, references.

➤ Child's view of own capacities

➤ Risk for RAE children according to key informants

➤ Risk for RAE children according to the available references

CHILDREN WITHOUT PARENTAL CARE
"MLADOST" CHILDREN'S HOME, BIJELA

Macro level

From the children's perspective, certain categories were identified at the macro level, related to institucional, economic, socio-cultural factors and social marginalization.

This section will present the categories within the factors given above and analyze them from the perspective of children.

Institutional factors

The analysis of children's responses identified the following categories in the domain of institutional factors:

- Perception of the functioning of the Home as an institution;

- Functioning of other institutions of the system that have direct or indirect impact on children's lives;

- Perception of opportunities and chances provided by the institutions of the system, after leaving the Home.

The perception of the functioning of the Home as an institution

Children identify a certain routine and structuring of time in the Home, which they associate with the policy of the institution they live in. They notice that their day is organised differently during the winter season, that is school year, than during the summer season. They perceive their day during the winter season as richer in contents and better organised, with various duties and activities related to school and school assignments making their day more dynamic and fulfilled. They see the daily rhythm of activities in the summer as closely connected with and adjusted exclusively to the precisely scheduled and compulsory meals, while the rest of the day is their free time that is left entirely to them to organise and structure. There are no compulsory or organised activities, and they perceive the ones the regular ones as monotonous, boring them and making each day look the same.

Otherwise, in the morning, everything is the same: in the summer we sleep late, then have lunch, go for a swim, have a snack, watch TV or go for another swim, then we have dinner and sometimes go out in the evening. Every day is the same. It's different when we go to school, it's more interesting. I don't really like going to school, but then there's something to do.[99]

From the children's perspective, the whole summer period is marked by the arrival of guests to one wing, which is the reason why they are moved to the other wing. It is also necessary

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[99] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.5), Bijela, 18 July 2006

to mention that some children visit their parents (if they have parents) or relatives for summer holidays, so there are fewer of them in the Home. This practice emphasises the children's sense of not belonging to this institution. Children find additional grounds for that in the amount of attention that the relevant staff members devote to the guests.

Now guests in the Home are more important than us. We can't even have birthday parties and there are many of us in the family, there aren't enough places to sleep. [100]

Having to surrender their own place to some unknown guests during the summer is very hard for children. They make an effort to bring some personal touch and introduce something special in the space (the room) they inhabit throughout the year. They arrange that space, using their creativity and introducing personal details, such as posters, photos, advertisements and precious things, and then have to remove and/or destroy all of that in the summer.

And it's hideous, we're all together now and I don't have my own room but some person, who knows who, is sleeping in my bed and my room. We even had to remove all the posters from the room, now we have nothing. [101]

In addition to their days being better structured and more dynamic during the winter period, children feel that, at that time, all the activities in the Home are intended and focused on them. This gives them a sense of belonging and importance within the institution, unlike the situation in the summer. Children feel that are deprived of all the activities that are important to them personally, such as birthday parties.

It's somehow nicer in the winter, you feel like one's own person in one's own home at least a little bit. [102]

Children recognise that, within the Home, they are provided with all the things necessary for life. Regular meals are provided, as well as clothes and footwear, education, books, even pocket money (5 euros per month). Only when they leave the Home, or just before leaving, they realise that this routine and the things made available to them provided them with a sense of security. Still, they are also aware that such an environment did not give them a chance to get some experience in all aspects of independent planning and decision-making necessary for independent living

I have to admit that, before this, I never concerned myself with anything, everything was fixed, things to eat, things to wear, nothing was my concern. And now suddenly I need to live on my own. I'm getting panicky. [103]

The only segment where they recognise the presence of care and protection in their life in the institution are the constant checks that all residents are present. They see one side of this as protection and resiliency to different factors; the other side is that this concern is purely

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[100] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[101] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 13 – 17, Bijela, 15 July 2006
[102] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 13 – 17, Bijela, 15 July 2006
[103] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.13) Bijela, 27 July 2006

formal and restrictive in relation to some of their personal needs and desires. Children are aware that all of their basic needs are met within the institution – regular meals, accommodation, footwear and clothes, regular education and health care. They consider these needs as very important, but perceive this as necessary, professional care provided by the institution; at the same time, they lack the feeling of essential and true care, support and protection at all levels.

At least here they check whether we are all present. And when we are not there at a certain time, the Home gets alarmed.[104]

Keeping their living space tidy and clean is perceived as a very important Home policy. Their responses regarding the way they spend their days usually include, besides meals, talk about tidying up the family, the rooms, as well as clearing things after meals. They believe that, if they complete all their duties related to maintenance, the instructors praise them and they fulfill all that the Home, as an institution, requires of them. Children feel that this requirement and expectation on the part of the institution denies them their individuality and specific needs, wishes and ambitions.

Only if you break a rule, they punish you, for real, and if you observe the rules, tidy the room and things like that, then everything is great. [105]

Really, the only thing that matters is not whether we've tidied the room and whether the family is clean. I 'm not the only one who thinks like this, but almost everyone in my crowd. So how can I feel fine when I'm being assessed by whether my room's tidy and nothing else - we're not all the same. I may want some other things; there, nobody praised me when this American said my English was good. That's my success too.[106]

Children see good performance at school, with no failing grades and no unexcused absences as a very important norm of behavior that needs to be complied with. They also believe that this norm is a form of institutional policy that needs to be observed. Their time for studying is precisely defined, and they know that, if they have some failing grades, they will be subject to stricter control until they improve them. When they have no failing grades, it is important that they stay in the room during the time allocated for studying; they think that nobody really cares about the efficiency and quality of their studies. They notice that this policy is organised differently for younger children than for elementary or secondary school students. More attention is devoted to the learning process at the start of their schooling, at the age when continuous monitoring and assistance are considered as necessary.

When we were little, there were some instructors that we studied with, and we had to learn it all, they made us. And now it's all up to us - it's important to them that we sit and study after school, but they don't care what we study.[107]

[104] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006
[105] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.22), Bijela, 31 July 2006
[106] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006
[107] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.5), Bijela, 18 July 2006

During the summer, senior secondary school students have the opportunity to do practical work in the parts of the Home assigned for guests, such as one wing, the "Jadranska vila" Hotel and a small apartment house (property of the Home). Children see this as an opportunity to do some practical work and earn some additional money, as well as one of the available options for fulfilled and organised free time. It is necessary to underline that children see this work within the Home as their own choice, and not as coercion or command. If they take up this kind of duty, they know that they need to persist, although it deprives them of some activities that are more interesting to them. We will present the way one of the children sees their work in the Home as compared to forced child labour and exploitation for the purpose of work.

Well, I don't know, depends on why they work – I know it depends for the ones from the Home: sometimes they don't really feel like working, they would like to go for a swim, and they say they have to work. Well, they have to, if they have accepted it; you can't work one day and not the next. It's like studying: if you don't study for a week, your grades go down, so even if you don't feel like studying that week, you have to, if you want good grades. So I don't really pay much attention when they complain, because that was their own choice. But those children who have to work because they have nothing to eat – I feel sorry for them.[108]

Concerning the structure of their free activities in the Home, the activities they talk about and attribute importance to are birthday parties, travelling and workshops that prepare them for independent life. They see birthday parties as something organised especially for themselves - each individual child feels special and appreciated when they receive their presents and the birthday card. This feeling that this is an activity intended only for them personally is the reason they attribute such great importance to it.

And when there are birthday parties and the social workers calls out my name, I feel like a celebrity.[109]

Travelling is also considered as a very important and highly appreciated activity that children enjoy, look forward to and dream about. They have the awareness that such activities provide them with new and different experience and knowledge, and sometimes a wonderful chance to spend time with other children. However, their descriptions, perceptions and lists of the places they visited with the Home, do not carry such a strong emotional quality as when they talk about the birthday parties. The reason is that they do no perceive this as an activity focused on them personally and as individuals, but as involving the whole group.

It was great when we went to Switzerland with the Home, and this week we are going to Brčko, there's a meeting of children from different homes. And, Imagine, we are going to have a football tournament there! Boy, we're going to crush them![110]

Children also specify, as an important activity within the Home, workshops concerning independent life after leaving the Home, organised by the social worker and psychologist

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[108] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.21), Bijela, 26 July 2006
[109] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.5), Bijela, 18 July 2006
[110] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 13 – 17, Bijela, 24 July 2006

from the Home and involving senior secondary school students. These workshops aim to provide support for their independent life after they leave the Home.

Though, the workshops we had with the social worker and the psychologist were important for me, as they instructed us about some things we are going to need once we leave. How to manage money, look for work and so on. But it was all very well when we were doing it, because summer seemed to me so far away at the time. [111]

The quote above shows that these workshops are useful, but not sufficient to give a child a sense of security and certainty in facing the outside world. The preparation they are provided is insufficient in that it does not make them feel capable of independent life. Children believe that the state has to have an elaborated system of institutional functioning for the purpose of providing secure and certain future of Home residents, and that they should be informed about that system.

The perception of the key informants who work in the Home mostly corresponds to that of the children, although the perspective is somewhat different. They think that children currently living in the Home have good living conditions and that their days have established and clearly structured schedules. They believe that children have nothing to worry about while livingin the Home, that everything is provided for them, starting from food, clothes and time for studying, and their only duty is to study. Key informants think that schedule is very important for children to function adequately, although they point out that, in the summer, the schedule is built around the exact times of meals. In the winter, that is on school days, the schedule and the organization of the day are more structured, because they are adjusted to school-related duties, school hours, and time for studying afterwards. They also believe that the instructors' duties are better specified and easier to perform, since they are responsible for fewer children than in the summer. During the summer, an additional complication for the instructors is that children (especially the older ones) are dispersed around the Home and that they are often difficult to gather and focus on duties such as tidying and cleaning. Since they are focused on performing the basic duties, the instructors often do not have time to create interesting activities for children. The schedule also includes fixed times for going out - they emphasise that the instructors constantly monitor their movements and are responsible for each individual child. Key informants notice that observing a defined schedule often makes the residents feel restricted, but that it would not be possible to achieve anything and that children would be living in chaos without a precise organization of the day. Residents of the Home are free to go out, provided they inform the instructor on call.

When you look at the Home and the children in it on a winter day and on a summer one, you get a completely different picture of the way the Home functions. It is somewhat chaotic during the summer, considering the number of the instructors and other staff is halved, most of them on holiday. It is most important that one wing is rented to tourists, so all the children stay in one wing. The instructors in charge of a family are not the same ones as during winter, so they lose some of their authority and they have a much more difficult job. In addition, the instructors are faced with -

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[111] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.13), Bijela, 27 July 2006

I have to say justified - revolt of the children for not having their own beds but being required everything as if their life was the same.[112]

They also state that various aspects of designing activities outside the institution have been introduced in children's life in at least some ways. Trips in the country and abroad are organised for children at least twice a year, and individual trips are also organised in cooperation with the competent Centre for Social Work. The activities that take place in the Home that are recognised by the staff as stimulating and important to children are birthday parties, creative workshops, and especially workshops concerning independent life, conducted with students of the final year of secondary school and aimed at providing them guidelines for future independent life, empower them and give them support for independent life.

The reference materials that concern exclusively children without parental care are rather scant in Montenegro. They do not pay attention to the structure of organizing children's time in the Home, although both children's and adults' responses show that they consider this an important aspect.

Functioning of institutions that have direct or indirect impact on children's lives

According to the children, the organizations that are relevant for them and have impact on their lives are: the Centre for Social Work, school and organizations that implement activities intended for establishing contacts with other children or creative and fun activities for them within the institution.

I've made a decision, I always plan the things to do. I have a plan what to do for the summer holiday. There, I've decided to go home, and that depends on my social worker. She needs to get this confirmation from the Centre whether my parents are home, that they haven't left for somewhere. But I wouldn't even ask to go home if my parents weren't there. I wouldn't go there if they weren't there. Where would I be if not with them? I have talked to the social worker from the Home about it and but she just says it will come through, and I wait. They don't know what it means when you make a decision and plan something for a long time, and then you have to wait.[113]

They believe that the Centre for Social Work has a crucial role in finding employment and carrying on with their lives after they leave the Home. They think that the Centre and the people working there only concern themselves with the formalities related to finding jobs for them, and that they remain alone with their dilemmas and fears of independent life. They do not see the assistance of the Centre for Social Work as long-term and continuous, which is what they perceive as necessary.

Right, I have just completed secondary school, and have no idea what to do now. I know, I've finished school, I need to consult with the social worker from the Home

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[112] Interview with a social worker from the institution for children without parental care, Bijela, 13 July 2006
[113] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.5), Bijela, 18 July 2006

and my social worker and get an identity card, then they'll find me a job, and, as far as I've understood, I have 6 months to organise myself. They will provide something for me by then. I have completed a cookery course and I can't say I like that job. But that's how things are. I sometimes think – other people have managed, why shouldn't I? I have been here for a very long time, almost since I was born, I have no parents and my relatives get on my nerves, they never took much care of me. So I'd start on my own. I have to admit I feel afraid. I can't get round to completing these things, I keep waiting for the summer to be over. I have a feeling it will somehow all be easier then.[114]

But still, I depend on my social worker, on the job she finds me, at least for the start. Even if I make an effort, I may not be able to make a living on it. [115]

For school-age children, school is very important in structuring their time and providing some contents that are not related only to the formal acquisition of knowledge. Most children say they do not like going to school very much, although they consider education important. However, school provides organization of one portion of their time, along with an opportunity to make friends and spend time with children outside the Home. Having friends and spending time with the children outside the Home is important to them – it gives them a sense of their own worth and being accepted by the community. Children were informed about the phenomenon of trafficking in educational workshops implemented in schools, which were most frequently described as promoting useful information about such phenomenon in the society, but were perceived as frightening. Children say that they were provided information, which was, in their words, "horrible", in the sense that something like that could and did happen to children. However, these workshops did not provide any specific support and protection mechanisms to children.

We've heard about it in school. We just got scared, and that was all. Later on we commented how nobody should be trusted, especially if they indulge you.[116]

Out of the organizations that they identified as implementing activities for children and for the well-being of children, these children specified the "Children's Association" as well as volunteers from different countries of the world who visit the Home every year, teach them different things, tell them about the countries they come from, teach them some of their languages. Children perceive these activities as very positive, but short-lived. When they talk about the things they learned from different people coming from abroad, they talk about different, greater and better opportunities for living abroad, which inspires them to consider the option of going there themselves.

Well, we often have foreigners coming here and when we talk to them we see that everything's somehow nicer in their countries and better organised, although we have never seen any of it. Some volunteers from abroad also come here often, they teach us to sing songs in their language, a bit of the language too, but that's short. They tell us about their country and we just dream, without any real chance to see it.

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[114] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.13), Bijela, 27 July 2006
[115] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 25 July 2006
[116] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006

You need money to do anything, and only parents can get you money, and it's difficult to find it for all of us. And who cares, anyway?[117]

Children's responses show that they are aware that the chances for going abroad are small and that fulfillment of this wish depends on other people. They also believe that an invitation to go abroad by one of the volunteers poses no risk, because all people who come to the Home are checked, and if the Home provides guarantees nothing bad can happen to them.

Though, I think all those who come to our Home are checked. So if they offered us to go abroad and if they vouched for us, nothing of that kind would happen.[118]

Key informants working in the Home and the representative of the Centre for Social Work think that the care provided by the Centre, as well as schooling, fall under their formal competencies. The Centre acts as an intermediary (at all levels) between the resident and the family, and is responsible for finding him/her a job and accommodation after s/he leaves the Home. In school, children need to acquire the knowledge defined by the curricula. Key informants state that children do not have adequate support systems, in this institution or the other institutions of the system, that enable them to manage in the adult world. They believe that the care provided by the Home comes down to formal protection of children, while the Centres for Social Work provide formal and limited care and supervision of children who leave the institution. The care provided either by the Home or the Centre for Social Work to children leaving the Home does not correspond to the living standard in Montenegro. As far as schools are concerned, it is necessary to underline that the level of education of children from the institution is not excellent, and that the professions that they are trained for are usually not in demand on the labour market. Thus, the professions they are trained for do not match the demands of the labour market.

The official policy of the competent institutions (Centres for Social Work) is that they take care of the child for the maximum duration of six months after leaving the Home. It is considered that coming of age (18) is the criterion for starting independent life. Children's comments presented here, as well as comments of key informants, show that coming of age in itself does not have crucial importance, but that, instead, there are different aspects important for a child to feel confident about independent life.

Perception of opportunities and chances provided by the institutions of the system after leaving the Home

Most of the responses and statements provided by senior secondary students are full of anxiety about the time that is to come soon and inevitably, when they will need to leave the Home. This anxiety takes the form of a variety of fears and uncertainties concerning the way to cope with the new environment. Children show a clear awareness that life in Montenegro is very hard, and that even the fact that an institution is assigned to find them a job does not mean they can guarantee to them a job that would provide them the necessary conditions for living.

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[117] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006
[118] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.10), Bijela, 19 July 2006

Well, now I have to leave I realise that freedom is not as comfortable as I thought would be, once I was done with the Home. Perhaps because I don't see I can really make a living in this country doing my job.[119]

Children think, that, since they have nobody else except the institution, which is responsible for them until they reach 18 years of age, nobody is going to be concerned with them after they leave the Home. They realise that they need to rely only on their own capacities, which they distrust, even in this hypothetical consideration.

Well, I think the state needs to provide that for us, because we've really deserved it. If they can't provide that to others, there's not much chance they'll provide it for us. We're the fifth wheel.[120]

Children believe that their status and education cannot ensure employment and, in turn, secure and comfortable life. They state that this may serve as a rason to take up any job that is offered to them that seems to bring them financial security. They are aware that taking up such a job may be a risk for them and that they may get exploited or abused on the job.

When someone doesn't know where to look for a job, and then if they come across someone in their first job. Someone more serious, adult, who offers them a job, and they need the money. Of course, they take it.[121]

Children are aware that contact with some important people would provide them with considerable certainty. According to them, the important people are the ones with institutional and status power that could secure a good job, if these people were ready to help them.

One former resident tells me that one needs to work hard in the electrical engineering course, which is not a problem for me, and that, as far as he can tell, there aren't that many well-paid jobs available unless someone gets you one, unless you have some connections. So you may end up working for some miserable pay all your life. And I have no connections, where would I get them - I'm from the Home.[122]

It would help me if I knew someone would give me a job so I could make a living, and I don't think that really depends on the Home, but rather on some other people. So those people could give it some thought as well. We exist in this world too, so they could give us some attention.[123]

Children believe that their resiliency would be increased if the state really cared about their well-being and secured jobs in their professions and provided timely information about the opportunities and chances available to them. Children consider that it would be very

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[119] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.13), Bijela, 27 July 2006
[120] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 25 July 2006
[121] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[122] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (12), Bijela, 1 August 2006
[123] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 27 July 2006

important and reassuring if they had sufficient knowledge and information about what the future holds for them.

If they got us into schools and guaranteed jobs immediately after we finish, there would be no problems. This way, we don't have anyone and we need to survive. If the Home, the Center, the state, told us and guaranteed us that.[124]

If I knew what lies ahead, at least approximately. What kind of job I'd get, where I would live and how big my salary would be, what would happen if I did this thing or that, how I could manage to live well.[125]

We mentioned earlier that key informants described how the professions that children are trained for did not match the demands on the labour market. They also believe that it is questionable whether children will be able to provide for themselves (accommodation, food, clothes and footwear) even after they find employment, because the situation in Montenegro is such that employment in public institutions does not imply financial security.

Talking about their prospects - what can that mean to them, who don't have anyone perhaps, and can get a salary of some 150 euros with their secondary school diploma. They can't even survive on that. And we always say that someone hasn't managed, which implies that this state functions only for those who have managed.[126]

The report titled "Placement of Children in Families (Foster Homes)" (Korać, Mijušković, 2004) focuses more on children's personal capacities after they leave the Home. It neglects the actual chances available to them, in the context of the situation in Montenegro. This proves, from the perspective of children as well as key informants, as a counter-productive and inefficient way to consider this problem.

Economic factors

The economic factor, as perceived by children, includes the following specified categories derived from their responses:

- Living conditions in the institution;
- Importance of financial security in life.

Living conditions in the institution

In the previous section we analyzed the children's perception of the living conditions related to the functioning of the Home as an institution. In this section, we wish to present their view of the position of the Home itself, of living in the Home and of the living conditions in the light of the economic-financial side of the Home.
 Children identify a considerable difference in the living conditions in the Home during the summer months. The arrival of guests means they are deprived of some things – they change

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[124] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[125] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 25 July 2006
[126] Interview with an instructor from the institution for children without parental care, Bijela, 23 July 2006

rooms, there are not enough beds, the guests need to be gratified, and they feel they are more important than the residents themselves. However, they also get the opportunity to work and earn money if they wish to increase their personal budget. They believe that this work enables them to fulfill some of their needs and desires, which they could not afford with the five euros they get as pocket money.

The older residents can earn a few euros, to go out or buy something nice for themselves, so they work here, help with the guests. And most of them go to schools for that kind of work, so it's like some kind of a practical training and they make some money on top.[127]

With a five-euro pocket money, what can they see or visit, so working here in the Home is their unique chance. With this pocket money we from the Home can't afford a proper date with a girl.[128]

Although they believe they cannot fulfill their needs with the five euros they get as monthly pocket money, they still see it as something that belongs to them personally and it is important for them that it is regularly provided.

Children believe that donors have much influence on the financial situation of the Home, for example Promonte, the mobile operator that provides donations and organises parties with some famous persons (singers).

It's great when they record us, then we all watch the recordings several times, the things we said, and at least for a couple of days we are not bored.[129]

Children consider that donations are necessary and useful for the Home, but they do not see this assistance as something that relates to them personally.

They've bought us nice things, pretty chairs, water-heaters, vacuum cleaners, but we like it when they give each one of us something.[130]

They give us money, they buy water-heaters, like this time, or radiators, or sneakers, books, and so on. They all, like, care, but we don't feel somebody has given something to us personally.[131]

All the visits of different individuals and organizations are of such quality and duration that, in children's view, they cannot provide any essential help, although they realise that they need their help and that it is provided in good faith. Children sometimes feel skeptical about the motives of some organization or donor, since they feel it only a formality for them or a way to fulfill their own interests.

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[127] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.21), Bijela, 26 July 2006
[128] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[129] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[130] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[131] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 27 July 2006

With regard to the financial conditions in the Home, the key informants state they are satisfactory, considering that children are provided the basic and necessary conditions for normal life: food, clothes, footwear, monthly pocket money.

They point out as an important aspect the circumstances for children's life in their institution. According to them, the everyday life, duties and activities in the Home do not enable the residents to get personal experience and insight as to how to resolve practical problems or meet some needs. Adults think that lack of such practical experience reduces their chances to manage and facilitates misjudgment and behaviour that may lead them to some risky activities.

Importance of financial security in life

I am afraid of being left on the street, being poor and putting my children in a home.[132]

Children's responses show a distinct worry and fear about financial security in the future. They have a very strong feeling of uncertainty and insecurity concerning financial security in the future, after the Home. Even now, while still in the Home, they perceive and assess the opportunities available in reality concerning financial security of an individual person. They see themselves as very much at risk and believe it would be easy to make them accept any offer that would provide financial benefit and gain. They see themselves as easy targets for the traffickers.

Children from the Home are most at risk of trafficking. Because they know we have no money and that makes us an easy target. I have to tell you, those people first scan which children to tempt, and we are perfect for that. You can tempt us into anything. Some of us, I mean.[133]

Money is the predominant subject of their comments and their permanent concern. To them, money is something that can provide them with everything that is important to them, something that gives them a sense of personal worth and importance. The importance of money is shown in their thoughts about how to obtain it, what they could achieve with it, as well as in seeing financial security as a solution to all the different risks threatening them. They often give comments in the sense "you need money to do anything", in response to any topic. They also think that money is not the only thing that they need and is important for them, that in some aspects the care and attention of other people are important. However, they think that money would give them a certain security that would enable them to develop quality relations outside the Home, on equal terms.

Although they are provided for in the Home, they see themselves as financially deprived because they cannot fulfill some more sophisticated needs related to the chance to choose and decide in the aspects of life that they perceive as only and distinctly their own, such as buying the particular clothes they like or going to a coffee shop.

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[132] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[133] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 25 July 2006

Then in the evening, when I go out, to be able to sit in a bar with my friends, just like other people our age who do not live in the Home. Instead of just walking along the same route; you can tell the ones from the Home, we just walk. There, you need money to do anything.[134]

Staff members of the Home also realise that children, although financially provided for in the Home, do not perceive it that way. They notice their constant insistence on being deprived in this regard and their aspirations in this sense. Key informants see children's perception of financial handicap and their strong aspiration for financial gain as possible risks after they leave the Home as well as while they are in the Home.

The majority of children in Montenegro are not provided any prospects for the future, let alone the children from the Home – nothing special is being done for these children apart the instructor's attention and maintaining the Home as an institution.[135]

The reference materials analyzed cover and discuss the risk related to children's poverty, without indicating the children's perception of it. We can see that even children who are financially provided for perceive themselves as being financially handicapped and that they constantly strive towards financial security. It is indicated that a child's perception of his/her own financial position is crucial in considering the opportunities available to him/her and may be very important in making potentially risky decisions.

Socio – cultural factors

Children's responses concerning the socio–cultural factors are organised and presented using the following categories:
- Constructions of childhood and
- Constructions of gender.

Constructions of childhood

Children believe that there is a clear difference and imbalance of power in the decision-making process and in the knowledge and trust between an adult and a child. In their responses, they describe and assess childhood taking the perspective of adults instead of their own. They think that their opinion and their view of reality are not important, but assess and attribute more importance to the opinion and attitude of an adult person.

And that they tell us as usual that we're kids and we don't know anything. We need to have things our way, and that is what happens in most cases. [136]

They associate childhood with naiveté and incapacity to make a good decision or assessment, due to lack of experience. They also think that, over years, children acquire experience and get more freedom in decision-making.

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[134] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006
[135] Interview with an instructor from the institution for children without parental care, Bijela, 24 July 2006
[136] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 28 July 2006

Children are more gullible and unable to defend themselves very well, and they also aren't able, same as me, they are inexperienced so to speak, that's what the instructors keep telling us: " You're not experienced enough yet."[137]

Well, I don't know, I'll be older then, I'll be grown up, and then I'll be able and will have to make the decisions myself.[138]

Children realise that the social norms ascribe to childhood the characteristic of fantasy and inventing things, which implies that their statements are mostly depreciated and always need to be checked and/or verified by an adult.

Nobody trusts children. Or us here in the Home. They don't believe us until a grown-up confirms our story.[139]

Adults working in the Home do not elaborate childhood or their view of childhood or children. However, their pronounced concern about the way for children without parental care to manage in the outside world and life may be connected with the construction of a child as incapable of making independent decisions and dependent from the adult.

Children, or their opinions, are not entirely respected in our country, because it is considered that we grown-ups know everything much better.[140]

In Montenegro, the traditional positioning of a child is that of being dependent on the adult. This imbalance of power is particularly emphasised in the family, in the parent-child relationship (Kovačević, 2004). The difference in the amount of power in the decision-making process is emphasised as well; this is confirmed by the view of children without parental care, although in relation to another adult authority and not that of a parent.

Constructions of gender

In the institution, the expected behaviour is, in general and within the limits of decent behaviour, identical for boys and girls. Children perceive, in a way, the similarity about what is not the desirable behaviour for both boys and girls; however, milder assessment is applied to the negative behaviour of boys. In case of risky behavior, a girl would be condemned harder than a boy, as shown in the example related to alcohol consumption.

It's stupid when a girl drinks alcohol. Everyone looks at her in a different way. No one takes her seriously any more and it's not nice when a girl drinks. I think a girl can do it, and I don't mind it, but we are under stricter control in a way; God forbid that an instructor learns that you have drunk alcohol - they can tolerate it when boys do it in a way, but not girls.[141]

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[137] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.10), Bijela, 19 July 2006
[138] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 25 July 2006
[139] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 13 – 15, Bijela, 21 July 2006
[140] Interview with an instructor from the institution for children without parental care, Bijela, 24 July 2006
[141] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 13 – 17, Bijela, 24 July 2006

Children believe that a girl is more exposed to different types of risks, such as being attacked, approached and mistreated. At the same time, they think that, if something like that happens to boys, they are more capable and have better chances and capacities to defend themselves. Thus, children recognise that the attention of adults is focused more on protecting and giving advice to girls.

I think they talk to girls more because all kinds of things may happen to them.[142]

They identify an evident difference between the social constructions of gender in intimate partner relationships. They clearly identify that socially expected behaviour is defined differently for girls (obedience, gentleness, sensitivity) and for boys (power in decision-making, more freedom of choice).

In Montenegro, a girl is supposed to be gentle and sensitive, please everyone and never cross anyone, while a man should be "macho" and everyone should admire him.[143]

Staff members of the Home perceive certain risks as bigger for girls than for boys. They paid less attention to analyzing the cause for this, and explained it by the general position of women in the society, which rests on the patriarchal premises.

In the article titled "Misogyny at Work" (Dabižinović, 2005.) points out the importance of the different gender roles within the patriarchal system as well as the greater risk and vulnerability of girls. This was confirmed by both children and key informants. Children believe that it is the reason why girls are devoted more concern and protection and subject to increased control in the institution.

Social marginalization

Home residents identify social marginalization at two levels – among themselves, and in relation to their peers and people outside the Home. Within the Home, they identify it when they arrive, when they are placed in the Home, or when they break some internal norm or rule of behaviour and get punished for it.

Their perception of being marginalised and discriminated against by their peers is more pronounced. They mostly experience being underestimated and looked at in a different way by their peers in verbal remarks and insults.

When you live in the Home, most of the other kids call you "Home resident" or they call you names, to insult you. That's awful for all of us and we usually avoid such an environment. It feels like they loathe us, though not all of them are like that.[144]

That's right, they often tell us that our mother has rejected and left us. Which does not have to be the case, but they don't want to hear that. We can't convince them of anything different.[145]

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[142] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[143] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[144] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 18 July 2006

They do not experience and perceive this kind of reaction only in children, but in adults as well; this additionally surprises them, and they attribute more significance to the reactions of adults.

And that's why they often call us all kinds of things, even bastards. Which is the worst. Some adults are like that, not just children.[146]

Staff members of the Home notice a different attitude of the community towards the children from the Home and understand that this may be hurtful and degrading for them. They believe that such discriminatory attitude is sporadic, and that it does not exist among the institutions representing the system (such as school). However, the responses of children show that they perceive this discriminatory attitude at all levels and in all relationships and consider it as very threatening.

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[145] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 18 July 2006
[146] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 18 July 2006

Available studies that focus on children from the Home do not consider discrimination against them. Hence, they do not explore the impact of such discrimination on children's functioning in the community or their perspective on the opportunities available if the community is discriminatory to them and marginalises them. This factor was identified in the responses of children without parental care, who perceive it as a threat and a risk.

Interpersonal level

Interpersonal level refers to the recognised and important relations highlighted by the children from the Home, which mark and shape their lives. The relationships with other people that are part of their experience refer to:

- Family;
- Peers;
- Relationships with the Home staff;
- Intimate partner relationships;
- Other relationships with people around them.

Family

Children identify relationships within the family as very important. It is very important and surprising that children without parental care, living in an institution, attribute that much importance to relationships in the family, and especially to parents, as important and supportive persons, regardless of their own experience. Children believe that the relationships with parents are very important for the support and development of different resiliencies. They underline that a parent has an indispensable and important role in all aspects of children's lives, providing guidance and support in facing everyday problems. They also believe that parents give children some certainty when facing and experiencing something new and unknown in the world around them and that they assist them to manage well in the future.

Well, somehow, when I look at my life, it all makes me sad. Especially when I thought of leaving and realised I had no one, and I think that's how it is for everyone here at the Home, because they don't have any parents. I think life would be much nicer for me if my mother were alive. No matter what our life would be live, I think I'd feel more confident that someone cares for me.[147]

The care and attention of parents is seen as very important for the psychological-emotional development of the child; importance is also attributed to the atmosphere of family life. In family relationships, they see more focus and opportunity for individual care and attention. They compare them with the relationships that exist in the institution, which according to them is unable to provide such care; hence, in most cases they do not expect to receive it at all.

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[147] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006

I also agree it's necessary for a child to have his/her parents' love in order to develop properly. To make progress. And whatever way they may live, when a family is together they find a way to resolve problems. Whenever we are faced with a problem, we have to deal with it alone, no other way.[148]

Some children, although they live in the institution, have occasional contacts and either get visited by their parents or go for visits themselves, depending on the reason for their placement in the Home. Most of these children have positive feelings about their parents, in spite of the fact that they have been placed in the Home, and mostly try to justify their parents and this action of theirs.

I have a great time there, but they can't take care of me all the time. My mother is ill and they have no conditions, only from time to time. Though they all love me there. And when I come they gather around me and it's important to them that I'm fine.[149]

Brothers and sisters are seen as part of the family; they also think of them in the context of taking care of them after they meet some needs of their own. When they have brothers or sisters in the Home, they feel more connected and believe they have at least some sincere and close support in their environment, which they insist is necessary. This relationship usually reminds them and gives them an impression most similar to a family atmosphere. If they have no members of their family in the Home, they feel additionally deprived and visibly more insecure with regard to social support.

My brother gives me some, advice how and what I should do, and he often tells me I should study and that's good for me. So now I try to study as well as I can.[150]

Children's responses identify contact with members of their immediate or extended family as very important and significant, especially if they have no parents. Children who have established relationship with their relatives maintain them mostly through visits during summer or winter holidays. However, it is important to underline that there is a wide range of developed relations with relatives that children mention. These relationships were described in different terms: lack of contact accompanied with an awareness of having some relatives somewhere; formal relationships that children do not sustain but avoid, because they do not consider them as important or needed; supportive, relationships full of care and closeness that children accept, cherish and feel evidently fulfill by.

I have a great time at my aunt's. She buys me anything I want, she takes care of me when I'm in Podgorica. I hang out with my sister there and I really like visiting them.[151]

Staff members of the Home believe that children attribute a lot of importance to parents and family life, although they may not have them as part of their own experience. They believe that their attitude towards family reflects their feeling of loneliness and emotional deprivation in the Home. They realise that their own inability to devote extensive attention

[148] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[149] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.5), Bijela, 18 July 2006
[150] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.5), Bijela, 18 July 2006
[151] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 11 July 2006

to each child from a certain group in a way that would particularly please the children and would give them the feeling of being members of a family. They believe, however, that they cannot apply this approach within their institution, no matter how hard they tried, unless the overall policy of functioning of institutions is changed.

Sometimes this attitude of the children fills them with sadness and a feeling of their own powerlessness and inefficiency, which they also face in working with children and in the assessment of their own work performed by other people. They think that, if we really want professionals to be committed to working with children with special needs, it is necessary to provide professional training and support to the experts working with these children.

If we really want to help children in institutions, traumatized children, children victims of trafficking and different forms of violence, then it is necessary to provide professional support also to the professionals concerned and working with them.[152]

Family support is generally seen as an important resiliency factor. Family provides children with support, love, and care; children without parental care cannot fulfill these needs in institutions, which may reduce their strengths and capacities for resiliency and increase the risk of trafficking.

Peers

I think friends are also very important – if you have good friends, they can always get you out of trouble. Even if it's the money, or anything else. A kind word, and when a friend tells you that you can do it, then I start thinking so too. When I was trying to get a better mark, and I had a fail that I though I'd never be able to improve, then a friend of mine told me I'd make it, and I did.[153]

Children's responses highlight the relationships with their peers as very important. The reason these relationships are very important for children is that they provide them with different segments of support and fulfillment of many needs. These relationships mostly refer to individual peers outside the Home. There are precise criteria used in selecting friends among these peers in order to achieve close and supportive exchange, the main features being trust, love, support and understanding. Children often perceive this relationship and support as a substitute for the parental ones.

Well, they're great, always there for me when I 'm having a hard time, they help me with everything. They are always on my side. Especially when it concerns the instructors on call or Assistant - they ignore them. I really like that, not that they're doing it, but because I know someone takes care of me too. When I don't have a mother and father like all children, then at least I have friends who'd stand by me. Not that we don't fight from time to time, but that only lasts a short period of time.[154]

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[152] Interview with a social worker from the institution for children without parental care, Podgorica, 28 May 2006
[153] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 25 July 2006
[154] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006

Organization of free time and the activities it includes are connected with peers, and the time spent with them always brings them pleasure, fulfillment and satisfaction. The time spent with peers is a chance to exchange feelings and experience, alleviate worries, share dilemmas and discuss their own experience; all this lessens the feeling of loneliness, which they often mention in their responses. The peer group is associated with the thought that "there is always someone there for you". They go out with their peers, spend time, have fun, play, and structure their time that way, especially during the summer months and during holidays in general.

I play football with my friends, we play cards. Sometimes we go out, when we have some money. We talk.[155]

My friends usually come with me when I go shopping, and after I've worn that thing I bought I lend it to them, so they can feel special like me.[156]

The importance of these relationships among the peers in the Home shows in their strong concern about the possibility of losing them once they leave the Home. They express this concern as a dilemma about whether they will lose touch with the peers that are important to them after they leave and start an independent life.

I feel concerned, I have some friends here that are really important to me and I'm afraid that when I leave the Home I 'll never have friends like them again. Who knows where I'll be and how it would be possible for me to come here.[157]

Children identify a hierarchy of older and younger residents. The younger ones are exposed to small-scale provocations and requests coming from the older ones; they realise the power of the older residents and wait to grow up and have the same power over other residents younger than them. These are small-scale provocations and minor examples of bullying, and they are aware that they would have the older residents' support if faced with a dangerous or difficult situation.

Well, they do something bad to you in a blink, and they also cause trouble to everyone around the Home, especially if they are older. All the older ones, both boys and girls, think they are the bosses and they are much smarter than us, so they mock us and tell us what to do. I don't even listen to them, although some get annoyed and they even want to fight with them. I'm not like that.[158]

Residents can definitely count on each other's unconditional support in confrontations with other people or other peers from their community. This support and accord as far as the outside world is concerned gives them a sense of belonging, support, group affiliation and accord. They all feel they have this support, regardless of sex or age.

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[155] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[156] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.22), Bijela, 31 July 2006
[157] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 12 July 2006
[158] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.21), Bijela, 26 July 2006

And I also know that, if I complained to anyone in the Home about someone bothering me, they'd all be there for me, whether or not we hang out together in free time.[159]

Children are aware of being different, and identify this in the attitude of other people and children towards them as social marginalization and discrimination. They feel more exposed, due to this, to different verbal provocations, insults, often some forms of aggression and/or assault. Children consider that all residents of the Home are exposed to such dangers; however, the dangers are greater for girls, who think they are unable to defend themselves. The support of other residents is very important for them in such situations; they are aware of this support, which makes them feel safer and more protected, regardless of their sex.

They may attack girls, because they think that girls from the Home have no one to defend them, and then they see they were very wrong. Someone will always stand by you here, if someone is bothering you, someone outside the Home.[160]

The relationships they build with their peers from school are also very important for them; they see them as supportive as well, but in a way associate them with the time they spend in school. They emphasize that the contacts with their peers from school are rendered more difficult in the summer due to a lack of logistics and funds (they do not have a phone available, and cannot afford the bus fare), which they consider to be the reason for meeting with them less in the summer.

Children highlight their contacts with the residents studying at university as very important. Children think that they have extensive experience and new knowledge and attribute great importance to their observations, attitudes and judgment. The information and recommendations that they can provide regarding life after leaving the Home are very important to them. They have pronounced trust in their experience and knowledge, since they also have the experience of life in the Home. Children are aware that there are only a few of these people, and that precisely this support from the ones who are functioning and managing in the outside world is important for them. They are also aware that, besides the residents who are university students, there are those who left the Home and never came back, whose experience may also be precious. They often mention that talks with former residents would lessen the feeling of uncertainty about leaving the Home, develop their resiliency and empower them.

And I like spending my days with our student here - she always has something interesting to talk about, and when I ask her something she really makes an effort to find the right answer for me. That's what the other say as well. She's real great, but I sort of think it's most interesting to her, at least while she's here, to spend time with the younger ones. Or she goes to a friend, she has money, and she doesn't have to tell anyone where she's going. No one checks on her.[161]

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[159] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006
[160] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 18 July 2006
[161] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.22), Bijela, 31 July 2006

Staff members of the Home believe that children are left to their friends in the Home most of the time in the Home. They think that, since the instructors are unable to respond to each child's need for attention and support, children find this support in their relationships with peers. They consider peer support as important in all segments of life, and something they can definitely rely on. They consider that peer support would be very important, one of resiliency factors for children after they leave the Home, and that it would also facilitate their becoming independent. Staff members of the Home have no record of what happens to children after they leave, including the existence or continuity of peer relationships.

They mostly rely on their friends in the Home, so they experience everything together. That support - although sometimes there are fights as well, which is normal – disappears when they leave the Home. If the support continued for a while, it would be easier for them to start an independent life.[162]

Reports available to us do not deal with peer relationships and their impact on risk and resiliency. Our analysis above shows that both children and adults identify these relationships as very supportive and as resiliency factors for children without parental care.

Intimate partner relationships

Partner relationships represent an important segment of life for the children in this study; some children, however, talk about this subject openly and admit their success, attempts and difficulties, while others do not. Their responses show that girls approach these relationships more seriously, in more detail, and share the experiences from such relationships more sincerely.

I know all men invent stuff about it. So the friends don't laugh at them. It seems to me that girls take it more seriously and talk about it in a completely different way.[163]

Some children believe that intimate partner relationships are the only possible form of male-female relationships and believe that is the way that boys look at them. They also believe that intimate partner relationships may sometimes be risky for girls because they may get manipulated, mistreated and abused.

Well, I don't have that many topics in common with boys. Each man that I spent some more time with and thought we could be friends would make a pass on me. So I treat them the same way, I only talk to a boy if I fancy him and would like us to be something more.[164]

Well, there were these guys who used to go out to the same place as my friends and me, and they assaulted us because one of my friends didn't want to be with one of them. They followed us everywhere and scared us. Wherever we went out, they'd appear and assault us, I didn't know what they could do to us.[165]

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[162] Interview with an instructor from the institution for children without parental care, Bijela, 24 July 2006
[163] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 13 – 17, Bijela, 24 July 2006
[164] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.8), Bijela, 25 July 2006
[165] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.8), Bijela, 25 July 2006

Children assess that it is very difficult, and sometimes almost impossible to establish partner relationships with girls and/or boys from the community, due to their discriminatory attitude. They perceive this as additional marginalization.

Because, you know, it's difficult for us Home residents to find a girlfriend we like, outside the Home. They look at us, in a way, as if we were disabled, just because we come from the Home. So if I like someone and she does not know me from before or she is not from the school, where most people know I live in the Home, I lie to her. I don't like to lie, but I think I have to, if I want her to agree to go out with me.[166]

Staff members of the Home are aware of the existence of intimate partner relationships among senior secondary school students. They see these relationships as children's own choice and try not to interfere, unless the relationships become troublesome and risky for children and the instructors assess that their intervention and assistance is needed.
Is can be observed that an open exchange between children and adults concerning intimate partner relationships can develop resiliency among children, which, according to children's responses and remarks, would be important. However, adults have not started such an initiative yet.

Staff members

Home staff members form an important component of the respondents' lives, shaped by the variety of relationships with them and their perceptions of these relationships. They highly appreciate when they sense, in these relationships, sincere understanding and true exchange, when their instructors respect them and share with them at least a part of their personal experience and some important segments of their lives. Children consider such relationships as supportive and very much needed in their lives, giving them a feeling that someone cares for them in a meaningful way. They recognise such relationships with some instructors; this creates a sense of belonging as well as a responsibility to behave in a way that complies with the instructor's expectations. If they fail to comply with the expected behaviour or do not fulfill an agreement, they feel bad about it in advance because they let down the instructor's expectations and they believe they hurt him/her. They see these relationships as desired and needed for all children who have been through some kind of a trauma or unpleasant situation like they have, due to being separated from their parents. They consider these relationships as crucial, and one that caters for their true needs.

Our instructor on call is phenomenal. I wouldn't trade him for anything in the world. You can really see that he cares about us. He tells us openly about his life also, shares everything with us, I like that in an instructor, instead of acting untouchable, like some do. And I visit that woman, she always pesters me to do some work, but at least I have plenty to eat, she prepares all the food I like. And I like pancakes best, with anything.[167]

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[166] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.12), Bijela, 1 August 2006
[167] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (21), Bijela, 26 July 2006

As for the older people, everyone here is OK for me, although my instructor is the best, he talks to everyone, asks us what we need and other things, so you feel he really cares and is concerned. I have to admit to you that is the most important thing for us here in the Home.[168]

Children experience some relationships where they do not recognise essential and sympathetic care, but only a formal dimension. They describe such relationships as only the basic professional requirement that when the instructor goes home they all need to be present. Children understand that this is only the instructors' job and that they cannot give them the warmth and love of a family; however, they believe that each instructor can and must give them some more attention instead of just observing the form.

I think that here at the Home they all sort of want us to be OK, but I also feel they can hardly wait to see us leave. I 'm not saying they don't care for us at all, but, for example when we're studying, it's important for them that we all sit here and, like, study. When we ask them for some explanations, they can't provide them. Or, for example, they could learn English with us or spend time with us - that's not so hard, and I think it would be more interesting for them too, instead of just being concerned that we're all present. They could listen some more to what we need and hire some people who could show us, develop something for us that we'd like. I've been wanting to learn English for six months now, because I'd like to go abroad, but there's no one to teach me, so how should I do it. Though, there was a lady from America who did some workshops, she comes every year and we do all kinds of things, but I 'd like more and I know there are some friends of mine who can't speak English and would like to learn. This is just an example, and there are thousands of the kind. Because the only thing that matters is not whether we've tidied the room and whether the family is clean. I 'm not the only one who thinks like this, but almost everyone in my crowd. So how can I feel fine when I'm being assessed by whether my room's tidy and nothing else, we're not all the same. I may want some other things; there, nobody praised me when this American said my English was good. That's my success, too.[169]

Children are aware that there are some institutional rules and that the instructors will accept and respect them to the extent that they observe these rules. If they fail to observe the Home rules and the instructors' requirements, children are aware that punishment will ensue. There forms of punishment that children describe are: shouting, prohibiting them to go out or go for swims, cleaning the toilets, pulling grass etc, as well as corporal punishment. Their responses do not describe a clear policy on determining punishment, so that it seems that the type of punishment and the way it is applied depend on the instructor.

They are good for the most part, but if you break a rule, they punish you for real, and if you observe the rules, they are great. Tidy the room and such. If you don't tidy the room, they sometimes shout. Most of the older ones are OK, it's difficult to play about with them, because they know all of our tricks already. But the younger ones you can knead easily, which is done, especially now in the summer, when the

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[168] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (21), Bijela, 26 July 2006
[169] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (1), Bijela, 23 July 2006

instructor on call is not with us and they take turns each week. At times I feel sorry for them, and sometimes we have a lot of fun.[170]

They believe that punishment for breaking a rule should exist, but sometimes see the punishment they get as pointless, not suited to the offence, and making them feel degraded. Children consider such punishment inefficient, because in most cases they break a rule or make a mistake again and get punished again.

If I'm punished, which is often the case. Then I do something completely pointless, pull grass. And in the evening I go out, if I 'm not punished. And if I am, I sometimes run away – sometimes they catch me, and sometimes they don't.[171]

Surely they should not be beaten because that cannot change anything. I think they should show they really care. It means a lot to the children. You can't treat everyone the same, and they treat all of us the same. There is something that would make any child change the way he/she behaves, isn't there?![172]

Children have a strong feeling that the staff have major influence on their decisions and that this is the reason why they do not feel free in the Home and why they have no options. They associate the choices with either observing or breaking a rule, if that may serve to fulfill a wish or need of theirs (such as going out to the town). They also know that the final decision, conclusion and rule must come from the staff and that they, as children, cannot influence that.

And this is us, holding hands, sort of helping each other, but we can't say a word, because our mouths are shut. You see, no mouths. When we say something, they shut our mouth.[173] (Interpretation of a child's drawing done during a focus group.)

Besides the instructors, they also perceive as significant staff members the social worker and the psychologist, on one side, and the director and assistant director, on the other. The social worker and the psychologist are mostly associated with the supportive attitude and organization of fun activities and workshops, while the director and assistant director are seen in the light of their influence on all the activities implemented in the Home and their required approval.

Staff members of the Home adults consider children without parental care as a special category of children, which requires additional love and care that their families do not provide. They state that there are individual initiatives on the part of instructors for some more profound and closer work with children. They see individual initiative in organizing different games, workshops and drawing sessions. They think that children in the Home need to be presented from the start all the activities that they can practice in their free time, so that they could organise their time themselves.

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[170] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.22), Bijela, 31 July 2006
[171] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.5), Bijela, 18 July 2006
[172] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[173] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 12 July 2006

Of all my activities with them, most often we talk, draw, at this time we go swimming, I read them a book and so on. Sometimes we sing. That is all fun for them, I can't say it engages their attention for very long, but I don't know if the things I am doing are OK except by their smiles or hugs. That is the only sign I have done something nice, something they enjoyed.[174]

They also think that there is no support or specific work with the instructors for the purpose of more adequate and better quality relationship and work with children. There are some staff members who have been working in the Home for years, who follow children's growth, progress and life, feeling at the same time that they are not getting adequate satisfaction. The feedback they receive from children is that they can hardly wait to leave and that someone else would have surely taken much better care of them, while the system provides no support, only criticism for not doing this or that. That way, they work with generations of live human beings without being given a chance to share their own emotional tensions, dilemmas, successes and failures and without someone really listening to them. Sometimes it seems understandable to them that they act inadequately or with insufficient tact towards children.

It is easy to condemn the instructors for any trifle, a slap or inadequate punishment – don't get me wrong, I completely disagree with such actions – but we have to be aware they don't know or can't act any different..[175]

Key informants believe that concrete and continuous changes need to be introduced in the method of working with children in order to improve the quality of their life in the Home. At the same time, they believe that it is necessary to introduce changes in the Home policy to include supervisory activities for the instructors, which would facilitate and focus their work on activating and developing children's personal capacities and developing their resiliency.

As pointed out before, the volume of research concerning institutions for children without parental care is thin, so that no explicit data or conclusions are available on the impact of the instructor-resident relationship.

Other important relationships

The people that children recognise in their environment and that in some way influence their lives are the social workers from the Centre for Social Work, teachers, famous persons (special individual relationship), visitors, guests that stay in the Home in the summer, benevolent and violent people that they recognise in their environment.

The social workers from the Centre responsible for the individual child are perceived as very important, since children are aware that the solution of their concrete, actual and future problems largely depends on them. They see the social workers as intermediaries between children and their parents and/or relatives, as well as between them and their future jobs, i.e. the means to secure for independent life in the future.

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[174] Interview with an instructor from the institution for children without parental care, Bijela, 24 July 2006
[175] Interview with a social worker from the institution for children without parental care Bijela, 26 July 2006

When she enquires about a job for me, my social worker could, if she wanted or if she had the time, ask also about the things I wish for. [176]

Teachers are highlighted in children's responses as persons who can be very important and supportive, but some can also hurt children's self-confidence and self-efficacy by calling them abusive and degrading names.

Supportive relationships influence the self-confidence and self-efficacy of children. They see an image of themselves as successful people in the future in the encouraging comments given by their teachers, which has a reassuring effect.

I feel great when someone gives me praise and when I am brilliant in school. It's great when someone tells me: "you'll go a long way in life", and if they are also sincere, then I feel great. [80]

Children sometimes identify a negative, discouraging aspect in the relationships with teachers, when they humiliate them because of their ignorance or behaviour and make them feel bad.

I had a problem with a teacher and I didn't want to study her subject at all – she really insulted me, called me a goose and a cow and other things. So I spoke to my friends from school and my form-mistress and they persuaded me to study after all and I barely managed to get a pass. [177]

Some children have the experience of a famous person becoming part of their relationships and lives, although usually they were the ones to establish contact. This contact and attachment become very important for the child, because someone who is known by many people is in a specific domain focused only on them, through occasional personal contact, gifts, and exchange.

I have a godmother, V.M. She is too nice to me, when I met her she offered to be my godmother. And she baptized me and bought me a gold necklace. I speak to her often, and she sometimes sends me an SMS or rings me up. We discuss various things. Everyone thinks being a singer is easy, and it's not, because she talks to me often about her life. [178]

The Home policy that children identify as a positive one is that of having frequent visits and talks with various people, which provides new contacts, new information and experience. In talking about these contacts, children express their inner need to belong and love; however, these contacts always seem insufficient to them, because they are not continuous. Their responses show that whatever the duration of contacts with other people, there is never enough time or space for getting the contents that they really aim for. In the end, they remain feeling insufficiency and deprivation, regardless of what they receive.

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[176] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.13), Bijela, 27 July 2006
[177] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.22), Bijela, 31 July 2006
[178] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006

The guests who are accommodated in one wing during the summer cause different emotions among children; depending on their interests, children establish some relationships with them. Some children establish friendly relationships with the guests and spend a part of their free time with them, while others ignore their existence completely and try to keep a distance.

Well, I have some friends, and now we've met some guests, so I go out with them. They're great, we go for walks, sit in a bar, chat and have fun.[179]

I don't know, I'm not one of those people that spend too much time with these guests here; I help out if there's need, but otherwise I don't address them. Just say hi, and that's all. They all seem sort of revolting to me, they act as if we were their servants. I don't care, I do what the ones from the Home tell me to do and I don't even listen to them.[180]

Children from the Home have an ambivalent and cautious attitude toward unknown people in their environment. No matter how benevolent their approach may be, children are aware that precisely such care and attention may serve to lead them into some risky situations.

Well, if they said they would take care of us – there are many children here who don't have parents or anyone at all and stay in the Home the whole time. So if someone offered them just to take care of them, and gave them just a little bit of attention, they'd follow that person.[181]

They are also aware that children may be attacked and threatened by some people from their environment, since they have had the experience of unpleasant events with people from the outside world that caused them to feel insecure for a while and afraid to stay in the Home. At such times, they feel that the staff members and senior residents protect them, which in turn results in their feeling secure and safe.

We were here once, having a birthday party, and a man was hiding behind the building that day. Some people from the Home chased him carrying clubs but he got into a car before they reached him and never reappeared. We had to close all the shutters at the time. The people from the Home told us to do that, everyone was scared.[182]

Staff members of the Home believe that contacts outside the Home are very useful for children, and serve to develop their judgment and attitude towards other people. They consider supportive relationships with people from relevant institutions that children are in contact with, such as the staff of the Centres for Social Work (usually female social workers) and schoolteachers, very important for developing their capacities. Concerning the Home policy of accepting and supporting contacts and cooperation with many institutions and organizations implementing activities with children in their respective domains, these

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[179] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.8), Bijela, 25 July 2006
[180] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.13), Bijela, 27 July 2006
[181] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.5), Bijela, 18 July 2006
[182] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 18 July 2006

activities provide contacts with various people, which adults always see as something positive and useful for children. With regard to children's relationships with the guests, adults do not have a concrete attitude, but they state that their stay in the Home considerably disturbs the usual dynamics of children's life. Staff members of the Home believe that sometimes there are problems with some parents or other people who attempt to disturb children, but they believe they handle such situations by talking to children and, on the other hand, taking considerable actions to protect the Home. Their opinion is that incidents of this kind take place very rarely.

As stated in the previous chapters, available reports do not address children's relationships with other people from their environment and the relevant impacts on risk and resiliency. This segment of relations identified by children and key informants is not analyzed further, although these relations are recognised as very important for children. They are to a certain extent capable of influencing the development of their individual resiliency; however, there are also some relationships in the environment that may be disturbing and therefore risky for a child.

Individual level

Children's responses related to the individual level were organised according to the following categories:

- Age;
- Sex;
- Characteristics and skills;
- Education;
- Decision-making;
- Hopes and dreams.

Age

Children believe that, regardless of their age, there is a risk of taking up an offer that would, at least in their view, provide them with the kind of life they aim for. As far as age is concerned, they only identify a different type of approach and different reaction of children to reality and the people around them depending of age. Children's responses show that younger children show their need for contact, attention and love more openly and engage in communication with other people (adults) more easily, so children think that makes them more likely to accept a risky offer and suffer abuse. With regard to risky offers, they think that, although older children are more cautious, the situation when they may be lured and abused may be lack of work and ways to earn for a living. This results in the recognised readiness to accept any offer that they assess may enable them to fulfill their wishes and needs.

Anyone can trick us, because we have nothing anyway, and we are content with little. There, these small children, whenever someone comes to the Home they stick to them.

And we older ones don't have any opportunities anyway. So any work comes handy.[183]

Staff members of the Home believe that children are not at risk of trafficking while in the Home, because the very method of work of this institution implies a clearly structured method of monitoring and checking children's movement in the Home. They also believe that the mechanisms for adoption, foster families and occasional visits to parents or relatives are under the supervision of a competent institution (Centre for Social Work), with constant additional checks and monitoring. Key informants consider that these children are exposed to great risk after they leave the Home, although at that time they usually do not fall into the category of children. They think that formal maturity of these children, due to their being overprotected within the institution, does not suffice for them to manage independent life after leaving the Home.

The available reference materials consider this factor as important (one of the studies that identify this factor is '"Nobody's Children" (Žegarac, 2005) and relevant for putting a child at risk at the individual level. The risk for those of younger age is identified in their reduced capacity and ability to make judgments, while for adolescents it is the children's own judgment that they are capable and able to make their own choice that may put them at risk. It can be said that children in institutions trust unknown people; however, on the other hand, they are very suspicious about any offers. They think the overall situation in which children live and the opportunities they identify as available for the future carry a potential risk, which both children and adults associate with leaving the Home.

Sex

With regard to sex, children indicate that the expected behaviour is formulated in a similar way for both boys and girls: be good, well-mannered, polite, and observe the rules. However, children notice a completely different assessment of certain types of behaviour in boys and girls. They notice that, in case of breaking some norms or rules, girls will be punished and condemned more severely, by both adults and peers, for the same offence.

It's not nice when a girl drinks. I think a girl can do it, and I don't mind it, but we are under stricter control in a way; God forbid that an instructor learns that you have drunk alcohol - they can tolerate it when boys do it in a way, but not girls.[184]
Children identify a greater risk for girls if their behaviour and appearance do not conform to the defined norms and requirements. They consider that such behaviour and appearance expose a girl to more open condemnation and abuse by the environment. They consider that girls more at risk, and therefore under closer control and monitoring of adults. Children justify the risk when a girl's behaviour does not comply with the expectations and attribute all responsibility to the girl, without paying attention to the motives or condemning the other party.

She shouldn't provoke other boys – for example if she wears mini skirts or puts on too much make up. I don't mind that, but I know some who do.[185]

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[183] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[184] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 13 – 17, Bijela, 24 July 2006

The traditional pattern of intimate partner and/or male-female relationships in general is clearly identified in children's responses. Children are aware that a man has a dominant role and influence on all segments of a woman's life, and that a woman is expected to meet the requirements and look and behave in line with them. If she refuses this position, she is inevitably at risk of different forms of condemnation by the community. Accepting such position as well as the confrontation itself may be both a risk and a resiliency for a woman (girl).

Right, boys can have a say in many things in our lives, but we aren't allowed to make any remarks.[186]

Staff members of the Home invest more effort in the protection and control of girls, because they believe that, being girls, they are immediately more at risk. The biggest threat they identify for them relates to intimate partner relationships - the threat of being mistreated and manipulated within the relationship, and of getting pregnant. However, they believe that necessary measures are implemented in the Home, to the extent of their capacities, to protect all children, regardless of sex.

The patriarchal hierarchy of values and the traditional subordinate position of woman - observed in children's responses as well – poses a risk of different forms of abuse and manipulation. With regard to residents of the Home, we can see that both children and adults assess that girls are more in danger, but in the form of assumed, traditional and stereotypical learned risks that originate from the position of woman.

Characteristics and skills

Children assess that their developed characteristics and skills are the most important resource for managing successfully in their future life. They doubt, to a considerable extent, that their characteristics and skills are sufficiently developed, while knowing that they cannot be sufficient to manage if they do not have additional support from their environment and community. These thoughts considerably sustain children's fear and anxiety related to independent life, especially when that time approaches.

I need to leave the Home soon as well, willy-nilly. They say I'd manage, that things are up to me when I get out - oh sure, right![187]

Children are also aware that their responsibility, effort and endeavour are required in order to open the gate to chances for safer, better quality life after they become independent. Most of their responses contain readiness to make such personal effort, and they think that is the only way they can expect some support and benefit from their environment and the people around them.

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[185] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 13 – 17, Bijela, 24 July 2006
[186] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 13 – 17, Bijela, 24 July 2006
[187] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 13 – 16, Bijela, 25 July 2006

Well, you have to persist in everything, and make some effort. I sort of think there are always people who will help us if they see we are dilligent and we work. So it's about what is in our head, and if we start thinking no one wants us, then no one will want us.[188]

Children are aware of the importance of personal characteristics as a source of resiliency or risk for managing in the real life and for making correct decisions and assessments in different situations and circumstances. Children's responses mention some personal characteristics that they see as positive, i.e. supportive: persistence, endeavour, persistence in achieving one's aim, intelligence. On the other hand, they believe there are some characteristics that may put children from the Home at different risks, such as: gullibility, running away from the Home because of the feeling of being restricted and having no freedom, and stubbornness.

No, that's when they are looking for it. Some here, I won't mention names, run away from the Home in the evening to go out to town with boys. Something like that is bound to happen to them.[189]

Children recognise the contribution of some skills to their resiliency. The specific skills they consider would enable them to feel their own worth and build additional resiliencies are foreign languages skills, especially knowledge of English. They try to develop these skills in various ways and to utilize them if the opportunity arises; however, they do not recognise any systematic support from the institutions to this aim. They think that they possess, or would like to develop some useful, practical skills that they could develop in the Home, through some organised activities they would enjoy. Children see such activities as very useful in developing their self-confidence and their sense of their own worth.

It would be most useful if someone heard what I wanted to do. Cooking, for example – there are so many of us completing the same school and they could sometimes hear what we have to say and we could make whatever everyone in the Home wanted, but that doesn't happen.[190]

Staff members of the Home believe that an important characteristic of these children, unlike other children, and one that may enhance the risk is their gullibility, recognised in easy and spontaneous establishing of contact with different people, even strangers, if they pay them some attention. They also see as risky their lack of independency with regard to practical issues and decisions in life, which may put them at risk of being influenced by someone from their environment once they start independent life. Key informants associate this lack of independency with children's dependency on adults while they are in the Home (Home staff) and the predominant influence that adults and this institution have on their life in the Home.

The available studies and reports do not pay particular attention to the characteristic and skills as either risk or resiliency factors. It is not possible to conclude which specific characteristics and skills would be risky for a child or would provide resiliency. It proved as very useful to determine which characteristics and skills children considered as important for

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[188] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 13 – 16, Bijela, 25 July 2006
[189] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[190] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006

them and which made them feel self-confident. This insight could have considerable impact on the creation and design of prevention programmes that would focus on strengthening the skills and characteristics important for the children.

Education

Children's responses highlight education as important, related to all segments of life and success in life, and providing children with a sense of their own worth and efficacy. Such importance and priority in providing overall conditions for life are attributed to knowledge and formal education by all children, regardless of their individual achievement at school. Children also recognise that individual motivation and efficiency in studying depend on different factors. They believe that their motivation and their success in studying do not depend only on their efforts, but that additional motivation and stimulation are needed, from adults from school or the Home. However, they do not underrate the importance of personal effort and persistence, and notice that most children from the Home see attending school only as physical presence there.

We know it's important to study, and not just go to school for the sake of being present.[191]

I have to tell you that it is possible to talk children, especially the younger ones, into anything, just so they don't go to school. So it is necessary, at least in the beginning, to make school more interesting.[192]
According to children's responses, success in life depends on one's success at school. This attitude expands the influence education and knowledge on the entire personality; they believe it contributes to the development and enrichment of all segments of children's lives, and a person's life in general.

It's important that we study so that we become good people and have a good life and give our children all that we never had. Attention and other things that we dream about, and we take them everywhere, and see that they are doing great.[193]

School is also important because it teaches you how to act in life, beacuse the more knowledge you possess the more you are worth and appreciated by people.[194]

Children's responses show that success at school is also very important for their everyday life. It also shows that success at school influences the development of better interpersonal relationships with the staff of the Home, and that, if their achievement at school is satisfactory, they give them more freedom in decision-making and trust their decisions more.

I think that I make all the decisions here, it seems that's how it goes when you are a good student – the instructors have more trust in you and let you do whatever you want.[195]

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[191] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care aged 16 – 18, Bijela, 11 July 2006
[192] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (12), Bijela, 1 August 2006
[193] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 13 – 15, Bijela, 21 July 2006
[194] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.12), Bijela, 1 August 2006
[195] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.12), Bijela, 1 August 2006

Staff members of the Home also believe that education is important and often mention this to children, urging them to study. However, they think that children from the Home do not attain very good education, most of them learning trades that are usually not in demand on the labour market and do provide good prospects for adequate income. This position may put children at risk of searching for a better job and income.

They don't get some great diplomas, except a couple of them - the rest complete the cookery course or some trade. Ideal for abuse, especially now, in the time of gray economy. No one registers employees, except state institutions, and I think young people strive for bigger salaries, even against their own interests. They put up with all kinds of things. And these children are ideal for something like that.[196]

Level of education is often defined as both a risk and resiliency factor. A higher level of education is considered as a resiliency factor. The Institute for Strategic Studies and Prognoses report (2005) shows that the employment rate is lowest for secondary school level, which may represent a risk for children from the Home, most of whom complete this level of education. Children are provided jobs by institutions, but the jobs provided to them, that match their qualifications, do not necessarily mean that they are provided financial security.

Decision-making

With regard to decision-making, children clearly identify the decisions they are allowed to make independently in the institution they live in. The decisions they identify as the ones they make independently are related exclusively to simple routine activities during the day, such as dressing, choice of company, the way they spend their free time and how much effort they invest in the activities prescribed by the Home rules.

Children state that their decisions, however, are mostly marked by the influence of adults and the Home, even when they concern some routine everyday activities such as the time for their meals, the time to come back from a stroll, whether they are allowed to visit someone etc. Although aware that their decision-making is under the control of other people, there are instances when they make their decision, i.e. choose an activity that is more interesting for them at that moment to meet some of their current needs and desires.

Well, I think I can make all the decisions within the limits of what is available to me. I can decide where to go and what to do. But I can't make any decisions about anything further than that – I have no money, plus I don't know if they'd let me, for example, go to Budva, that's my dream. Or buy a film we can watch. Someone else decides on that, not me, and I decide on the everyday things, like who to be friends with, how to study, what to do. Like, when I decide not to tidy my room, I know the instructor is going to shout at me, but I don't do it because I don't feel like it.[197]

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[196] Interview with an instructor from the institution for children without parental care, Bijela, 24 July 2006
[197] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.22), Bijela, 31 July 2006

Within everyday functioning and life in the Home, they see the options in decision-making only in the framework of the established rules of the Home and the additional requirements defined by the instructors. This insight enhances their feeling of lack of freedom. The options they recognise with regard to their decisions are compliance with the existing rules or breaking them. Children believe that complying with the rules is a sort of resiliency and an opportunity for direct gratification of some needs, since it earns them the trust of their instructors. On the other hand, breaking the rules, although sometimes it suits their needs and desires, is seen as risky, and the majority believe it should be punished.

Children are visibly upset by the awareness that their options and choices are limited when they leave the Home. They also believe that the opportunity for making decisions in general is reduced and entirely influenced by other people, because, on the one hand, they have no knowledge or experience with the way the world outside the Home functions, and on the other hand, the Centre for Social Work decides about their future life and work.

Each time I have nothing to do I think about how I'm going to get by, and that strains me, so I make sure I am busy all the time, so I don't think. I have the impression that none of it depends on me.[198]

Staff members of the Home also realise that most children's decisions are influenced by other people and associate this with the construction of childhood in our culture and the policy of the institution. They consider that this pattern does not enable children to test their own decisions and therefore creates a sense of dependency and inefficiency, as well as subordination to adults, which may make them vulnerable to risk and all forms of abuse.

Children here completely depend on the grown-ups, not only in the financial sense, but psychologically as well. How should I say it, usually it's like 'what do they know, they are still children, I know what's better for them.' Though, I often do that myself, because I really don't know any other way.[199]

Children's decision-making processes and forms usually do not get elaborated. However, it is indisputable that a child independently takes up some offer that s/he perceives as a chance for better life and better prospects. We can see that there are different influences on children's decision-making and that children are aware of the conditions and the manner they make decisions. This finding is very useful in fostering their resiliency and empowering children to consider different alternatives but make independent choices; this will make them feel more prepared efficient and capable of independent living.

Hopes and dreams

The hopes and dreams of children from the Home refer to continuing their education, career, income, independent organization of time, more freedom in decision-making, owning their personal space, starting their own family, traveling, visits and life in other countries.

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[198] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.13), Bijela, 27 July 2006
[199] Interview with an instructor from the institution for children without parental care, Bijela, 24 July 2006

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With regard to profession, they try to build their lives around the school selected; in most cases, they did not make the choice of school themselves. They often connect higher education with greater opportunities, as compared to the limited choice they have with secondary school education. The schools they attend in most cases do not match their wishes and interests, which enhances their fear of not having sufficient freedom after they become independent, of having to do what is defined for them in advance regardless of their wishes. They think this may make them dependent, even after leaving the Home, on someone; in this case the employer, and they identify the possible risk of some kind of exploitation. However, their hopes are constantly directed towards being able, after leaving the Home, to accomplish and fulfill even some wishes related to their profession.

I wanted to enroll the police academy, but I never asked anyone because I knew that the Home would not allow it. It's clear.[200]

In their responses related to hopes and dreams, most of them perceive overall personal fulfillment through the financial aspect. Even when living in the Home, they see that many of their wishes may be fulfilled if they had more money; they associate this with the sense of freedom and possibility of independent choice. They believe that financial security enables them to better adapt and integrate in the community.

I'd like to have some money and go to the shops and buy something I want. And a present for my best friend, to make her happy. We are so happy when we get presents, whatever kind, and we also like to give presents, you know. I'd like to have an activity during the day, learn English or learn to make something, that's great. Then in the evening I'd go out, be free to sit in a bar with my friends, just like other people our age who do not live in the Home. Instead of just walking the same route like idiots; you can tell the ones from the Home, we just walk.[201]

The hopes and dreams related to income and money are shaped by the desire to have their own space, family and comfortable life after they leave the Home. They often see going abroad as an opportunity to attain such comfortable life and better income, which is what they dream about. They consider this particular decision as depending on others, the Home staff, during their stay in the Home; they see this as a form of their protection.

I'm completing a cookery course, right, and that's what I'd like to do. Though I'd like to go some place abroad. Especially America, I think I could use what I can do very well, that's what the lady who came here to do workshops told me as well. I would not have to worry if I'd have the conditions for living and if I could have my own family without any worries.[202]

Children dream about making some independent choices and influencing the organization of life in the Home with their ideas. They consider that this desired aspect of functioning of the Home would contribute to their sense of freedom, which would assert their competency in some areas and give them a sense of efficiency and power. It is also very important for them

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[200] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.10), Bijela, 19 July 2006
[201] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006
[202] Interview with a child from the institution for children without parental care (no.1), Bijela, 23 July 2006

that they have their own space that would give them a sense of belonging, personal property, and appreciation of their individual and special qualities.

Due to lack of continuous care and attention focused on them individually, children's responses show that they also dream about adoption, when some "good people" would give them the quality attention and sincere relation that they wish for.

We've also written that we are adopted by some good people who would give us everything we have missed so far, and take care of us and pamper us and so on.[203]

Since they are aware that they will inevitably leave the Home one day, children hopes that the most outstanding and most important relationships from their time in the Home, presented through their relationships with significant peers, will remain unchanged, intensive, and continue. This is important to them because, if these connections and relationships continue, they will have the impression that someone somewhere cares for them and that they belong somewhere after all.

Staff members of the Home are aware that children dream and hope for a safe and certain life after leaving the Home. They believe that the institution provides that, to the extent of its capacity; however, they fear that this will not suffice and that children's wishes may generate the risk of taking up a tempting offer to earn enough money to accomplish their dreams and wishes and fulfill their needs.

The report titled "Combating Child Trafficking" (IPU, 2005) emphasises that most children who grow up in an institution do not have the sense of belonging to that institution and that their hopes may be oriented towards establishing such a relationship, which pose a risk of trafficking.

Children without parental care, residents of an institution

Children's responses are organised according to the three levels of their perception and functioning: macro, interpersonal and individual. Within the three levels, certain categories are distinguished that we will present in the form of diagrams, which will highlight the multiple influences on the child's decision-making, risk and resiliency.

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[203] Focus group with children from the institution for children without parental care, aged 14 – 17, Bijela, 18 July 2006

Diagram 7: Macro level

Importance of financial-economic security

Functioning of the institution they live in

MACRO LEVEL

Socio – cultural factors

Perception of functioning of the institutions of the system and other organizations

Social marginalization

Diagram 8: Interpersonal level

Relationships with the Home staff

Relationships in the family

INTER-PERSONAL LEVEL NIVO

Peer relationships

Partner relationships
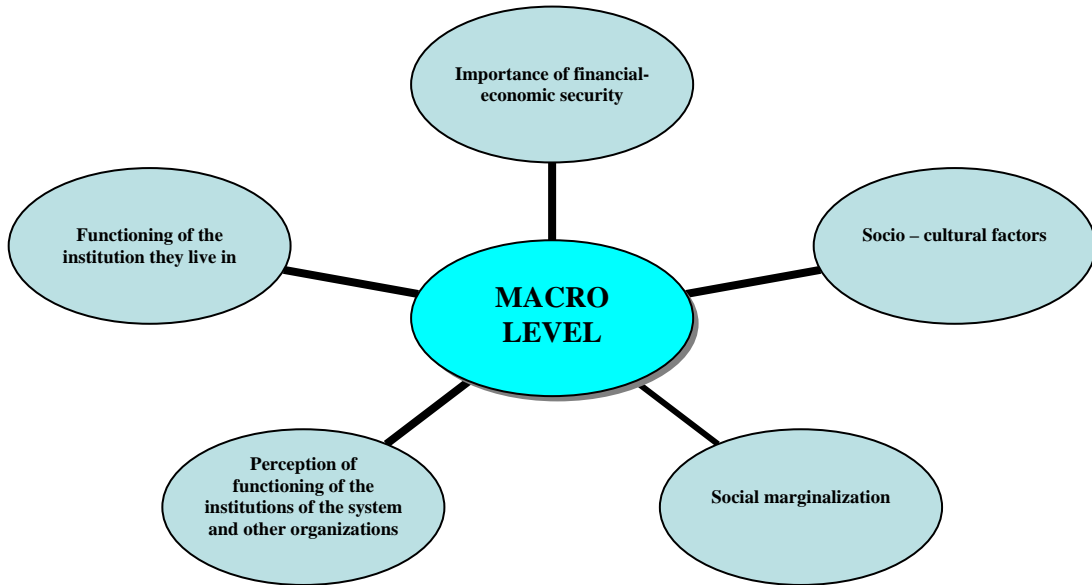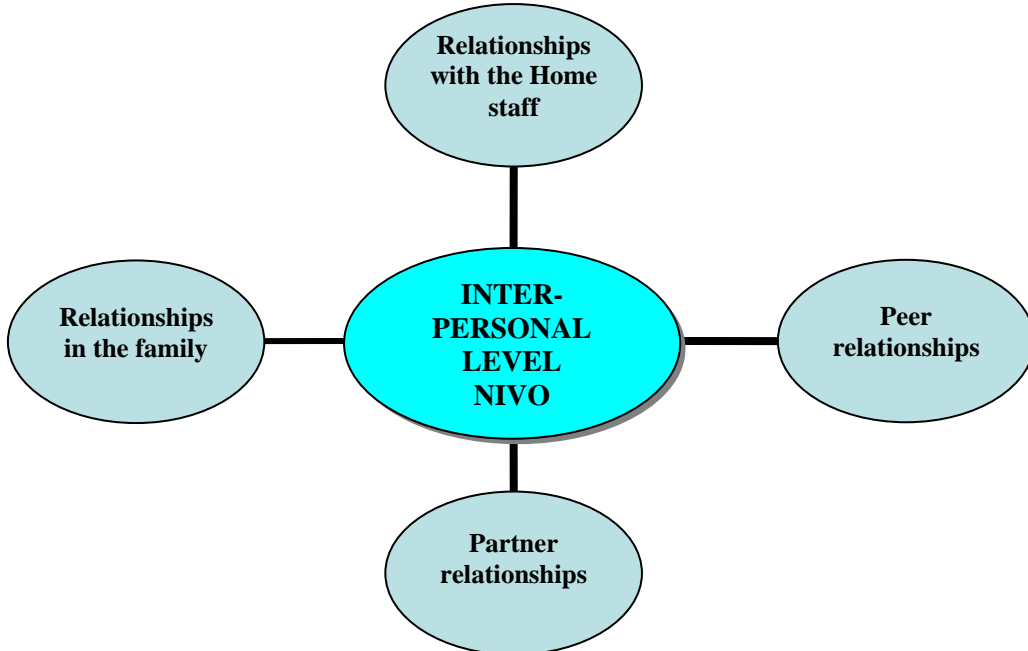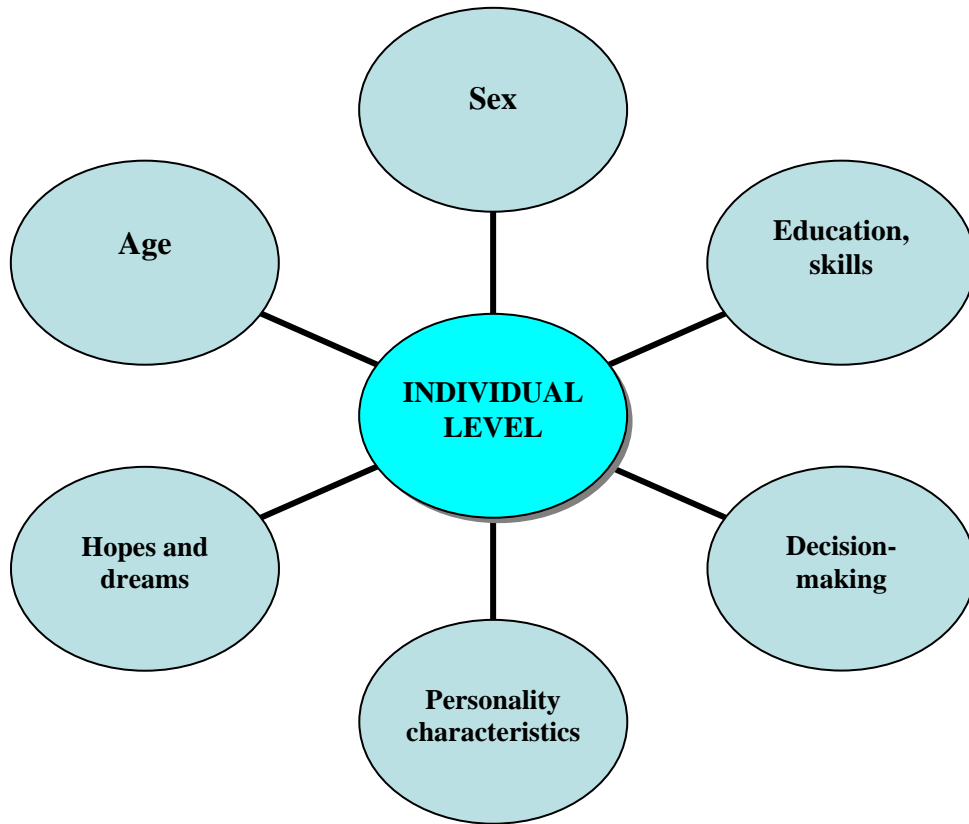
Diagram 9: Individual level

Below, we will present a diagram that presents the child's position in relation to influences generated at all three levels (macro, interpersonal and individual). We will show the child's perspective on the influences and network of responses to risk, resiliency and decision-making from all three levels. The analysis of children's responses showed the significant influence and constant interplay of these levels; it also showed that children's risk and resiliency cannot be influenced by any single isolated factor. The diagrams presented here only illustrate previous in-depth qualitative analysis of children's responses. We aimed for the diagrams to highlight the diverse risks and the one-sided perspective on them in the available reference materials and among key informants.

Diagram 12: Network of relationships and influences related to a child without parental care, from the perspective of a child, adult, references.

Key:

➤ Child's view of own capacities

➤ Risk for children without parental care living in the institution according to key informants

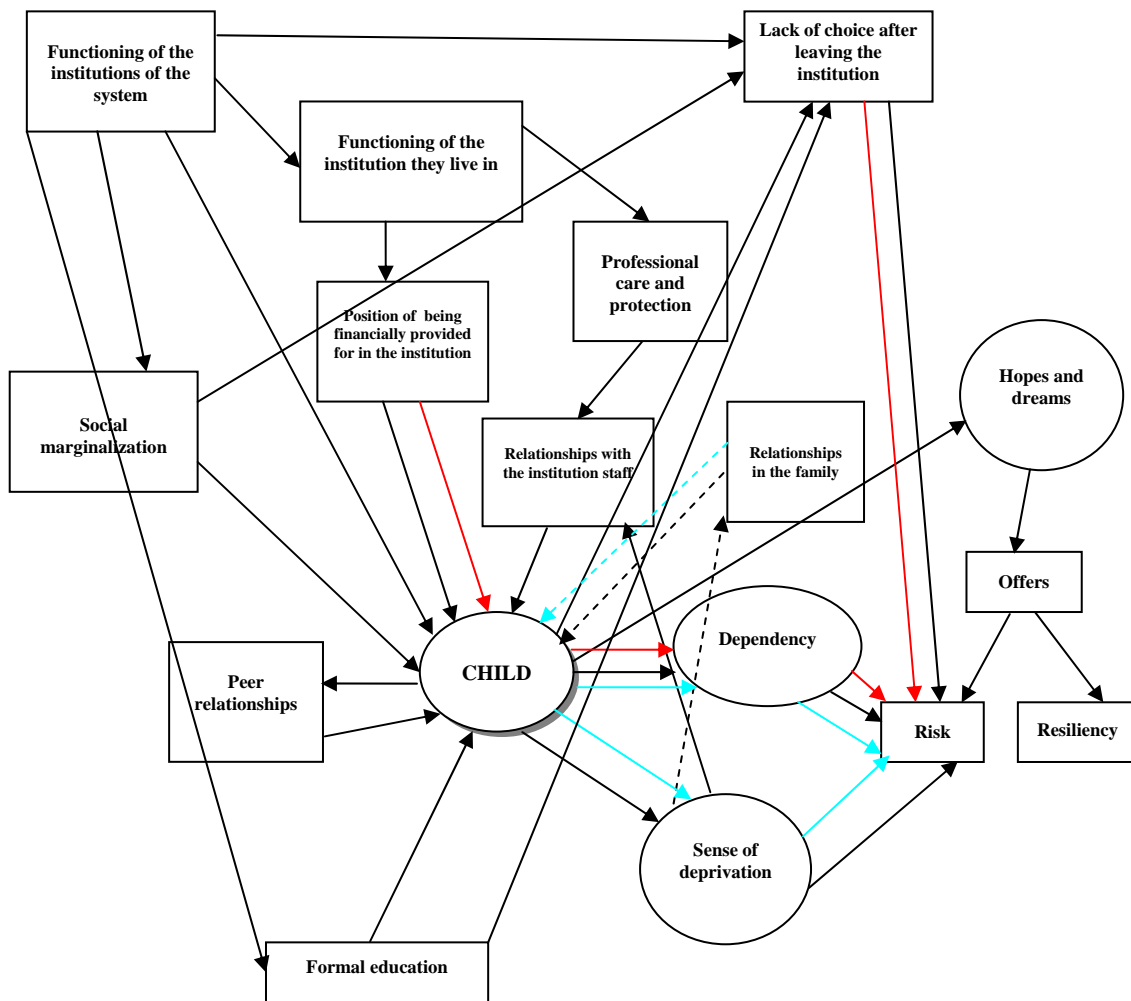➤ Risk for children without parental care living in the institution according to the available references

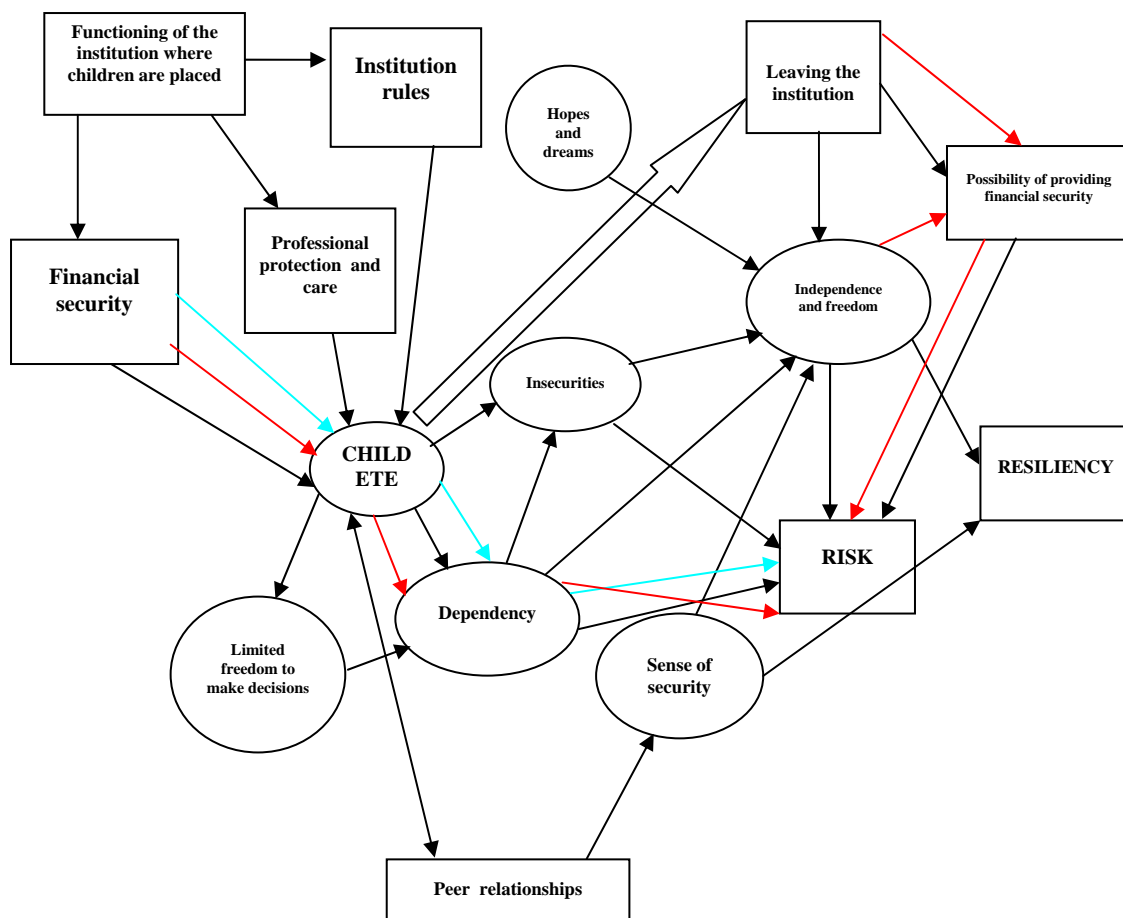**Diagram 13: Network of relationships and influences related to a child without parental care, from the perspective of a child, adult, references.**

Key:

➜ Child's view of own capacities

➤ Risk for children without parental care living in the institution according to key informants

➤ Risk for children without parental care living in the institution according to the available references

CONCLUSIONS

Research titled "Children Speak Out" involved two groups of children from different communities: children members of the RAE population of internally displaced persons from Kosovo and children without parental care, residents of an institution. The specific feature of this research was intensive and continuous work with children in order to listen, understand and present the world from the perspective of the selected groups of children. This approach was applied with the aim to find out how these groups of children perceived and recognised the functioning of the wider social environment and the changes taking place in it, to what extent this influenced their perception of the risks and dangers surrounding them, what kinds of relationships they developed in their environments, to what extent those relationships were supportive and/or restrictive, and how they influenced the children's perception of themselves. In addition, we tried to understand the children's decision-making processes, what they hoped and aimed for and how that influenced their perception of their own vulnerability and/or resiliency to different risk situations, including trafficking.

This research indicated a whole spectrum and range of interconnected factors that children perceive as influencing their feeling of vulnerability. On the other hand, children's responses led us to the recognition of resiliency, identified within their personal capacity, the relationships they developed and their environment. It showed that, from the child's perspective, there was no single factor or influence that would make them more likely or more at risk of getting into a risk situation, but an interplay of factors at all levels. Children's responses highlighted various links and influences that come from their community, which influence the relationships they built, and therefore also children's personal capacities and specific characteristics. This whole combination of factors proved important for the child's perception of risk and/or resiliency. This research showed that the children's view of reality was very complex and considerably not in accordance with the existing policy and adults' understanding of children's perspective, or programmes intended for children. Children's responses showed the existence of their view and understanding of reality and the necessity, if adults really want to strengthen and develop their resiliency in all segments, to use the approach based on their perspective.

The topics that were derived from research objectives and tasks included: children's perception of risk and resiliency at macro, interpersonal and individual level; the social support available to them; the safeties and dangers they recognised; their decision-making processes; their hopes and dreams; evidence -based policies and policies that children believe would make them feel protected and would meet their needs and desires and thus strengthen their resiliency. In exploring these topics through intensive work with children, emphasizing exclusively their view of reality, we believe that this research presented different angles of children's perception and possibilities to approach them in a manner that children think would be most efficient for them and would really help their empowerment and resiliency.

Concerning the phenomenon of trafficking, the available reference materials distinguish certain groups of children that are more at risk than others. The factors that are most frequently identified refer to the political sphere of life in countries undergoing transition and privatization. Our research showed that children see this factor of risks or opportunities

children contain through the clear perception of their life in the crcumstances that they live in and the opportunities within it. They think that the circumstances they live in and the functioning of institutions do not leave children a chance or choice that would give them a feeling of safety and certainty in the community, even the country. It is considered that poverty puts children at risk of trafficking – however, we noticed that poverty as assessed by the academics did not correspond with the children's perception of it. Children said that their children's assessment of financial need might put them at risk, especially if they saw no possibility or certainty of obtaining financial security in the future. The rigid norms of the patriarchal system were identified as an important factor within the socio – cultural norms that expose female children to greater risk. Children confirmed this, but emphasised that, besides the evidently greater risk for girls, there also existed the risk for boys related to their role and responsibility in providing for their families. Social marginalization was identified as an important risk factor, especially for RAE children, but based on the segment of interpersonal relations. Our research showed that children assessed this marginalization and discrimination as risky, but thought the marginalization coming from the global-institutional and systemic level more risky.

As far as interpersonal relationships are concerned, family relationships were identified as an important factor for the development of resiliency but also for potential risks, if the relationships were not supportive for the child. Regardless of the quality of their relationship with their parents, children placed considerable emphasis on the importance of family relationships. In addition to these, they listed a wide range of relationships that they built in their lives and considered important for the development of their capacities and assertion of their self-efficacy. These are peer relationships, intimate partner relationships, relationships with people important to them (teachers, instructors, coaches, neighbours). It is necessary to point out that this research showed the considerable importance of supportive, encouraging relations full of care and understanding, established at any level and either initiated by the child or the other party, for the child and the development of his/her resiliency.

With regard to the individual characteristics of the child, the available reference materials identified age, sex and education as important risk and resiliency factors. Age and sex were, in certain aspects, assessed as risks, while education was viewed only as a resiliency. We realised that children distinguished these segments, but that age, sex or level of education could function as either resiliency or risk, depending on the situation. Naturally, this led us to the sphere of children's decision-making, their hopes and dreams, which the reference materials did not analyze in more detail from the child's perspective. Our research showed that children had a clear awareness of their decision-making process and the aspects generated at all three levels that influenced their independent decision-making. It also showed that children were aware of the alternatives available to them and evaluated their own choices.

The use of action-participatory methodology in working with children proved as very important and efficient for essential discovering and understanding children's lives from their own perspective. Research of this kind, as well as the methodology, is very useful in the design and perception of the programmes and policies intended for a particular group of children. This approach enables us to learn about children's perception of their environment, the people they identify as important, the problems and dilemmas they face, the actions they recognise and the spheres where they believe such actions would serve more efficiently to

improve the quality of their life. This research proved how the essential helpfulness of employing this methodology when dealing with the institutions concerned with children. That would enable the institutions to really hear children's voices and thoughts and efficiently feed that into development and design of their policies. It is also necessary to point out that the methodology of action-participatory research and work with children may be employed in monitoring and evaluation of certain programmes for prevention. If such programmes really aim to empower children, we believe it is necessary to hear the voice of children, which only this methodology makes possible.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The analysis of children's responses identified many important aspects and segments that children recognised as help and support in developing different skills and abilities, organizing time in a quality way, enriching the contents present in their life, enhancing their own power in order to feel resilient to various risks that they faced or believed they might be facing in the future.

We will summarize the recommendations obtained from children by presenting different interventions, programmes and activities based on their needs and wishes. In line with our research approach, they will be presented in relation to the three levels: macro, interpersonal and individual one.

Children especially valued the research approach - direct contact with children and active listening to their thoughts and opinions, which helped them to feel better and more satisfied with themselves in the course of the research - as very important and supportive. They also stated that in their evaluation of research activities. The perspective and approach used in the research were especially appreciated; they thought that was the only way to help children and improve the quality of their life – to get to know them first, ask questions and develop programmes and interventions based on that.

Work with children from the RAE population of internally displaced persons from Kosovo

Macro level

- Improving the living conditions: regular cleaning of the camp, bathroom, hot water;
- Campaign to activate RAE population and provide remuneration for the people who would maintain hygiene in the camp;
- Networking of all institutions of the system for the purpose of ensuring better quality of life: regular social benefits, jobs for parents, education tailored to their needs, adequate police functioning regarding their protection;
- Campaign to eliminate discrimination against the RAE population among the domicile population;
- Training in trades and practical work, identified by the children as much more efficient means to build their capacity than formal education;
- Building workshops and/or smaller manufactures where they could work;
- Building a facility in the camp intended for children, where various activities would be organised for them;
- Building football pitches and basketball playgrounds or renting such facilities to involve RAE children in sports – it is also necessary to include help with equipment and membership;

- Develop programmes to raise the awareness in the RAE community, placing emphasis on reporting any suspicions of trafficking in their community to the competent authorities (clearly indicate how and who to report to, also protect the person reporting).

Interpersonal level

- Organizing various activities that would establish contact between the RAE children and domicile population, by means of organizing camps, joint creative, sports activities, excursions, folklore groups, parties, with the aim to develop the sense of belonging and expand the social network;
- Work with parents on raising the awareness about children's and women's rights for the purpose of more freedom and opportunities for RAE girls;
- Work with teachers of both lower and higher grades, for the purpose of increasing the motivation of RAE children within formal education;
- Establishment of counselling centres for RAE children and adolescents that would perform continuous long-term work with these children in order to provide psychological assistance and support.

Individual level

- Training in specific, practical trades;
- Practicing sports: basketball, football, boxing;
- Folklore and dancing practice;
- Help with studying;
- Emotional and social empowering through psycho-social workshops;
- Computer training.

Work with children without parental care, residents of an institution

Macro level

- More intensive networking of the institutions - Centre for Social Work, Employment Agency, Children's Home - concerning employment and providing clear, precise and well-timed information to the child on the chance and opportunities available after leaving the Home;
- Intensive networking of the Employment Agency, the Home and schools for the purpose of vocational guidance in accordance with the demands of the labour market;
- Clear policy focused on providing support to children after they leave the Home;
- Campaigns to promote foster families and adoption;
- Performance and recruitment of the staff members of the Home, vocational guidance that would direct children towards becoming instructors and taking up work in the Home in the future;

- Timely adequate police action, for the purpose of developing the feeling of security and protection as well as prevention of trafficking;
- Consulting and involving children in developing the policy of the Home, aimed to develop their sense of belonging and meet their personal needs (preparing the meals they choose, painting and decorating the Home, organizing personal space);
- Building a park within the Home: slides, swings, huts, sand;
- Severe sanctions for traffickers;
- Stetting up a computer room in the Home;
- Precise information for the children from the Home as to who to contact and how, if in danger.

Interpersonal level

- Establishing a counselling service for children and adolescents for the purpose of continuous and professional psychological help and support;
- Support and work with instructors aimed at their personal empowerment, with continuous supervisory activities;
- Work with elementary and secondary school teachers to motivate children and improve their efficiency in studying;
- Occasional, specified and structured meetings with children who left the Home;
- Organizing various activities that would establish contact between children from the Home and those from the local community, by means of organizing camps, joint creative and sports activities and excursions, for the purpose of developing the sense of belonging and expanding the social network;
- Training, establishment and empowerment of an organizations established by the residents, within the Home;
- Consultations provided by either a centre or a person that would focus on providing support to children after they leave the Home;
- Centre for consultations that would function in the Home and would involve residents (the older ones helping the younger ones);
- Individual networking and campaign to connect each child with a well-known person, who would then keep in contact with them;
- Theatre performances designed and carried out by the children from the Home;
- Peer education on different topics (drug addiction, trafficking, sexual education etc);
- A telephone available to the residents for the purpose of maintaining their important relationships outside the Home.

Individual level

- Learning foreign languages;
- Computer training;
- Support in studying, also possible peer support in the Home (older residents helping younger ones);

- Creative activities and workshops;
- Dancing, singing, acting lessons;
- Emotional and social empowering through psycho-social workshops;
- Practicing sports: football, basketball, swimming;
- Workshops and continuous work on psychological support for independent life.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: Excerpts from the Criminal Code of Montenegro on trafficking in human beings and child trafficking

Trafficking in Human Beings

Article 444

(1) Anyone who by force or threat, deceit or keeping in delusion, by abuse of authority, trust, relationship of dependency, difficult position of another person or by keeping back identification papers or by giving or receiving money or other benefit for the purpose of obtaining consent of a person having control over another: recruits, transports, transfers, hands over, sells, buys, mediates in sale, hides or keeps another person for exploitation of work, submission to servitude, commission of crimes, prostitution or begging, pornographic use, taking away a body part for transplantation or for use in armed conflicts shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of one to ten years.

(2) If the offence referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article is committed to a juvenile person, the offender shall be liable to imprisonment prescribed for that offence, even if there was no force, threat or any other of the stated methods present in the commission of the crime.

(3) If the offence referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article is committed to a juvenile, the offender shall be liable to imprisonment for a minimum term of three years.

(4) If offences referred to in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of this Article have caused serious bodily injuries, the offender shall be liable to imprisonment for a term of one year to twelve years.

(5) If offences referred to in Paragraphs 1 and 3 of this Article have caused death of one person or more, the offender shall be liable to imprisonment for a minimum term of ten years.

(6) Anyone who commits the offences referred to in Paragraphs 1 to 3 of this Article or participates in their organised commission together with several other persons shall be liable to imprisonment for a minimum term of five years.

Trafficking in children for adoption

Article 445

(1) Anyone who abducts a person who has not yet reached the age of fourteen for adoption in contravention of current regulations or whoever adopts such a person or mediates in such adoption or whoever for that purpose buys, sells or hands over another person who has not yet reached the age of fourteen or transports, provides accommodation for or hides such a person who has not reached the age of fourteen, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of one to five years.

(2) Anyone who deals with activities referred to in Paragraph 1 of this Article or participates in their organised commission together with several other persons, shall be punished by imprisonment for a minimum term of three years.

Submission to slavery and transportation of enslaved persons

Article 446

(1) Anyone who breaching the rules of international law puts another person into slavery or other similar position or keeps another person in such a position, or buys, sells, hands over to another person or mediates in buying, selling or handing over of such a person or induces another person to sell own freedom or freedom of persons he/she supports or looks after, shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of one year to ten years.

(2) Anyone who transports persons in the position of slavery or other similar position from one country to another shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of six months to five years.

(3) For offences referred to in Paragraphs 1 and 2 of this Article committed to a juvenile person, the offender shall be punished by imprisonment for a term of five to fifteen years.

ACRONYMS AND INITIALS USED IN THE TEXT

CRNVO – Center for Development of Non-Governmental Organizations (Centar za razvoj nevladinih organizacija)

CTRP – Child Trafficking Response Programme)

EU – European Union

ICMC – International Catholic Migration Commission

ILO – International Labour Organization

IOM – International Organization for Migration

IPU – Inter-Parliamentary Union

NATO – North Atlantic Treaty Organisation

NVO -– non-governmental organization (NGO)

ODIHR – Office for Democratic Institution and Human Rights

OSCE – Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe

RAE – Roma, Ashkali and Egyptians

UN – United Nations

UNICEF – United Nation Children's Fund

UNHCR – UN High Commissioner for Refugees – The UN Refugee Agency