

# PROFILE FORM AND INDICATORS FOR THE IDENTIFICATION OF THE VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING/EXPLOITATION OF EGYPTIAN MINORS IN ITALY

This form has been developed under the European Project AGIRE - Austria, Greece, Italy and Romania. Acting for stronger private-public partnerships in the field of identification and support of child victims and at risk of trafficking in Europe JLS/2007/ISEC/537 and updated with the information gathered during the participatory research action of the Project Providing Alternatives to Irregular Migration for Unaccompanied Children in Egypt.

Age/Nationality	Adolescent Egyptian boys
<b>TYPE AND PROBABILITY OF TRAFFICKING/EXPLOITATION</b>	Trafficking for purposes of labour exploitation: low Trafficking for purposes of involvement in illegal activities: low  Labour exploitation: medium to high Exploitation in illegal activities: low
<b>METHOD OF RECRUITMENT</b>	<p>In their countries of origin, they are generally recruited from poorer towns in the Delta region of Egypt. The regions where adolescents are known to originate from include: Kallioubia (Kanatir), Al Faium, Al Garbia, Shibin el Kom (Monufeya), El Sharkeia.</p> <p>Mostly they are sent by their families to Italy to meet up with people they know, family members, to earn money to send home, however some leave without contacts in Italy, therefore they have less means at their disposal. Families usually see the prospect of having a child in Italy as the best solution to secure the future of the child and the whole family. Often other children from the same village have left, and this encourages the child to compete, in a way. Financial success is tangible to the village as families renovate their homes and/or buy new homes or other material goods. It is absolutely true.</p> <p>One of the main reasons to leave is based on the vision of “fashkara”, those who live in Italy and when they return on holiday in Egypt they flaunt their financial success by having a car, a new house or scooter. In fact, these minors often perform menial jobs in Italy and are far from having achieved success, but that is not publicly admitted. The perception of those who live in Egypt is distorted. The envy that is created by “fashkara” pushes many to leave for Italy.</p> <p>The parent’s choice is binding on the child, and the success of their migration is measured by their ability to work and send money home (to repay the debt, to allow the family to live more comfortably, and to guarantee a wedding for their sister/s, and finally their own). They have a moral obligation to do their parent’s bidding, and this directs the child’s actions in Italy.</p> <p>The boys come from poor social and economic backgrounds and have little education as they come from villages in the country, where their family’s priority is for the boys to work in the fields.</p> <p>Trusted intermediaries arrange travel and give advice on documents and how to stay in Italy. Sometimes families do not the final decision of the boys who have come to know the intermediaries through friends, otherwise through relatives that make the initial contact. In fact, they are already aware of how the scheme works and though not completely trusting in the intermediaries they know they do not have another alternative They may be a group of small businesses with 4 or 5 recruiters. The initial contact with the intermediaries usually takes place in a dislocated place in a city near the larger city of where the departure takes place (e.g. Asyut), whereas other members of the organization are located near the departure location or in larger cities (e.g. Cairo or Alessandria). A debt of 4-6000 Euros is incurred for their services(some boys pay up to 10,000 Euros) and it may be enforced by a way of a false contract for sale of goods or a promissory note. In this way, if the parents of the boy do not pay, the contract is enforceable in court and the court could freeze their assets or they may be imprisoned for defaulting on payment . The psychological pressure driving from the shame of being sentenced by the court is worse than the sentence itself for the parents, consequently for the child.</p> <p>Sometimes a relative will pay for the trafficker on the parents’ behalf, but the debt remains.</p>

The intermediaries give directions on their travel and sometimes arrange for their desert crossing, from Egypt to their destination near the coast in Libya. Those who can afford it, travel by plane directly to Libya, while those with less money cross the desert on foot or by car, and with a mobile phone so they contact people who can assist them in each town where they stop.

In Libya, those who have arrived by plane and can afford it, are placed in hotels for a few days before their departure from Libya.

The others are made to wait approximately 2 months, living in a house with 10-15 other people.

Closer to the departure date, they are gathered and taken to warehouses for up to 2 weeks in the countryside near the coast, waiting for the best opportunity for the ship to sail. Usually, the transfer from these warehouses to the ship can be only in small groups ( 10 to 25) and normally they have to get on a small boat and then are transferred to the ship. This trip alone could last longer than one day.

---

## ENTRY IN ITALY

**By sea** - not only through Libya by boat, but occasionally directly from Egypt to Sicily (Alessandria , from the coast of Burullus Lake e Dumyat e from Port of Burg Mghizil and from Sallum to the border with Libya) in Sicily and in Calabria.

Upon entry, if they are identified as minors at Lampedusa centre or the place of landing, they are placed in Children's homes in Sicily or the area where they arrived, it is from there they promptly run away from to meet up with relatives or other people they know in the north of Italy. Many claim to have had passports taken from them in Libya, held by traffickers in exchange for further payment from their parents. This information comes out when the boys are not immediately identified as minors (due to negative results from wrist x-rays, for example) and they are requested to provide documents to prove their real age. The boys are usually able to provide a fax and original copy of their identity cards with relative ease, but not passports.

Some boys initially state their nationality as Palestinian, hoping not to be repatriated immediately but if their age is called into question, they are able to produce Egyptian identity cards. The fact that those arriving by boat are not Palestinian is further supported by the large percentage of those who run away from residential care instead of staying to request asylum. It seems the phenomenon has declined as they now know it is counterproductive.

Only rarely do they travel independently to Italy without having any contacts to meet up with.

If minors are not intercepted by the Authorities at the places of arrival, boat captains often take them to houses in the country where they must stay for a few days. The intermediaries then split them into small groups and accompany them to the railway station. Then they begin the journey towards central or northern Italy.

---

## METHOD AND PLACE OF EXPLOITATION/ACTIVITY

Once the boys reach their relatives/contacts in the north of Italy, who may be family friends or even neighbours, they present requests for guardianship with pre-prepared letters by their parents, to legalise the boys' status. If these contacts do not have the necessary legal status to present the guardianship application, they may rely on strangers.

Sometimes other foreign adults take advantage of a boy's vulnerable position and lack of direct knowledge and information, to obtain money in exchange for services (e.g. assisting them on their journey to the north of Italy, accompanying them to social services, etc.)

In more than one case, a group of boys who had arrived directly from Egypt to Sicily were abducted in Sicily by people attempting to extort further money from their relatives before allowing them to join relatives or other contacts in the north of Italy. They were kidnapped or lured away from residential care facilities and detained by individuals that appear unconnected to the trafficking ring.

Or the boys come into contact with adults while in a residential home that are already in Italy and the adults coax them into running away and to meet up in a city in the Central-North promising the young boys work. These adults get information about the places of

placement of boys who were left in at the arrival points from other boys but have already ran away.

Once the boys arrive at their final destination, they are then put to work on construction sites, or in restaurants/bars/pizzerias, usually owned by their Guardian or other fellow countrymen. Workplaces are generally in the Milan area, Rome, and in Turin

In the general markets they may earn as little as euro 2-3/hour, or euro 15 per day, but they must enter by climbing over the high perimeter fences so as not to be detected. Those working in kebab shops may earn from euro 10-12 for 6 hour working days.

They must pay off the debt, from 4-6,000 euro (up to 10,000). If they are not able to pay off the loan, then there is risk of serious repercussions for family members.

Guardians are not considered exploiters at all but as true benefactors. That is the reason why the boys rarely make contact with local welfare service providers (social services) or NGOs. Only when they have serious problems with their living conditions or treatment from their guardians, do they spontaneously present themselves to Children's homes asking to be taken in.

In some cases, the boys are directed to Children's Homes by their contacts in Italy so that the boys may gain assistance in obtaining documents. Often relatives are not able to ask for guardianship and they make sure to take the boys directly to the Police Headquarters for placement in a residential home.

---

## FAMILY STATUS AND LIVING CONDITIONS

A small percentage who do not have contacts in Italy remain in Children's Homes in Sicily where they are at risk of labour exploitation, mainly in agricultural work.

Others travel north regardless, and work in markets, steal, or deal drugs to live.

They live in flats with fellow countrymen who are not necessarily their legal guardians, and generally contribute to the relative expenses. Guardians believe they are doing a favour to the boys and their families by ensuring their regularization, so they do not feel obliged to also host and provide for the boys. Often the guardians lack the necessary resources, and live in small flats with their family unit, though in some cases they agree to pay the boys' expenses on the condition that once they turn 18, they will repay them.

Those without family ties or other connections in Italy may be found living in abandoned house, factories or in train carriages, for example, in Milan.

They work so much they generally only interact with their flatmates, co-workers and their relatives. Recently there has been an increased attendance at Day Centres where young people meet especially due to the increase in attendance. In fact, many Egyptian minors that are involved are 'new arrivals'.

Those who worked at general markets are forced to go to the market area very late at night, generally with the last public transport vehicle available, and to wait outside until the market opens, in all kinds of weather.

The boys' motivation to succeed greatly influences their opinion regarding their opportunities and working conditions. It raises the level of tolerance of their harsh living and working conditions, such that they consider them at any rate "sustainable".

In this context, labour exploitation and property speculation (i.e. unacceptable living conditions) are rarely perceived as such.

Some boys may resort to illegal activities to survive, and may therefore be at risk of exploitation by others for this purpose.

---

## INDICATORS OF TRAFFICKING/EXPLOITATION

### AT THE BORDER

1. As an unaccompanied minor arriving by boat:
  - lack of documents – passports withheld by smugglers in Libya, but Egyptian identity documents can usually be sent from home if necessary;
  - apparent knowledge of immigration/reception procedures in Italy;
  - false personal details given to avoid immediate deportation;
  - knowledge of contacts or contact numbers in Italy.

### **PLACE OF EXPLOITATION (country destination)**

1. A third person has possession of their passport  
Passports are confiscated in Libya by traffickers as a guarantee of payment by parents in Egypt.
2. Intervention by adults  
Adults, usually relatives, seek custody of the adolescent from public authorities.
3. High levels of debt
4. Psychological pressure
  - With the risk that their parents might be jailed, adolescents are anxious to work immediately to repay the debt.
  - Adolescents feel an obligation towards the adults in Italy who assist them to remain.
5. Very poor Italian language skills  
Underdeveloped Italian language skills given time present in Italy.
6. Lack of a network of friends in Italy who are not family; very limited social life  
Unless the adolescent has just arrived in Italy, having no friends outside of “work” colleagues/fellow countrymen could be an indicator of severe isolation due to the presence of an exploiter or the pressure to repay the debt.

### **VIOLENCE, ABUSE, NEGLECT**

1. Evident state of neglect  
Treatment may vary, but if the adolescent has poor personal hygiene or shows little care for their appearance, they are more likely to be in an exploitative situation.

### **IN THE PENAL CIRCUIT**

If detained for dealing drugs, the adolescent is likely to be in an exploitative situation. Illegal activities for adolescents it could be due to a need to survive on their own. These activities represent an indication for risk of exploitation in the future.

### **GENERIC INDICATORS OF VULNERABILITY IN MINORS AND YOUNG ADULTS**

1. The younger the age, the more vulnerable the person is.
2. Length of time spent in Italy and their ability to understand the social dynamics of the country, where they live, services available to them and the rights they are entitled to.
3. Knowledge of Italian in relation to the length of time spent in Italy and level of schooling.
4. The articulation and reliability of their social network/circle of friends in relation to their age and the length of time spent in Italy.
5. Continuity of staying in contact with their own family from their country and the likelihood of receiving their moral and material support, and the chance to return home.
6. Requirement to repay debts or send money home, especially if the minor has been sent by the family.
7. A state of health and physical well being that enables self-defence and familiarity with survival strategies, to satisfy their own primary needs in particular.
8. Ability to be streetwise and to manage street dynamics.
9. Likelihood of finding great difficulty to stay in the country regularly after turning 18.
10. Possibility of any illegal activities carried out in order to be self-sufficient which could be easily exploited by criminal organizations.