

KBO-KINDERZENTRUM
(Social-pediatric-Center-Munic-Germany)

kbo  Kinderzentrum München
Zuverlässig an Ihrer Seite

TUM (Technical-University-Munic) Board of Social pediatrics Prof.Dr.Volker Mall



ISSOP-CONFERENCE-2019-BEIRUT

"CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT"

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**- SINGLE-CASE-STUDY ~
HASARA-BOY ~ FOLLOW-UP 2015-2019**

-First seen at age 5 years on demand of kindergarden, youth-officials, pediatrician .

-Excluded of german kindergarden, because of

-massive violent behaviour towards other children (he heavily hit the head of another kid with both hands 5 times on a stonefloor)

- **restless like a panther in a cage**

-**lack of expected aquirement of german language**
(unlike other afghan children),

-**no integration into age-group** in different settings
(Kindergarden & Camp)

**-Questions: PTSD ? war-trauma? ADHD?
low IQ ? Other psychiatric disorder ?**

Why not clearing in pediatric psychiatry ?

**Because of parental refusal out of shame
& anger**

one teacher had called the boy "crazy",
which was a tremendous insult & worry to
the father .

The Story, as offered by the parents :

- rather short and, up to the child, "seemingly little impressing" flight-route.**
- parents with their only child left Afganistan rather smoothly in cars & busses towards Turkey & continued towards Greece behind the load of a van,**
- which the kid didn't witness, due to continuous drug-sedation of unknown substance by the smugglers .**

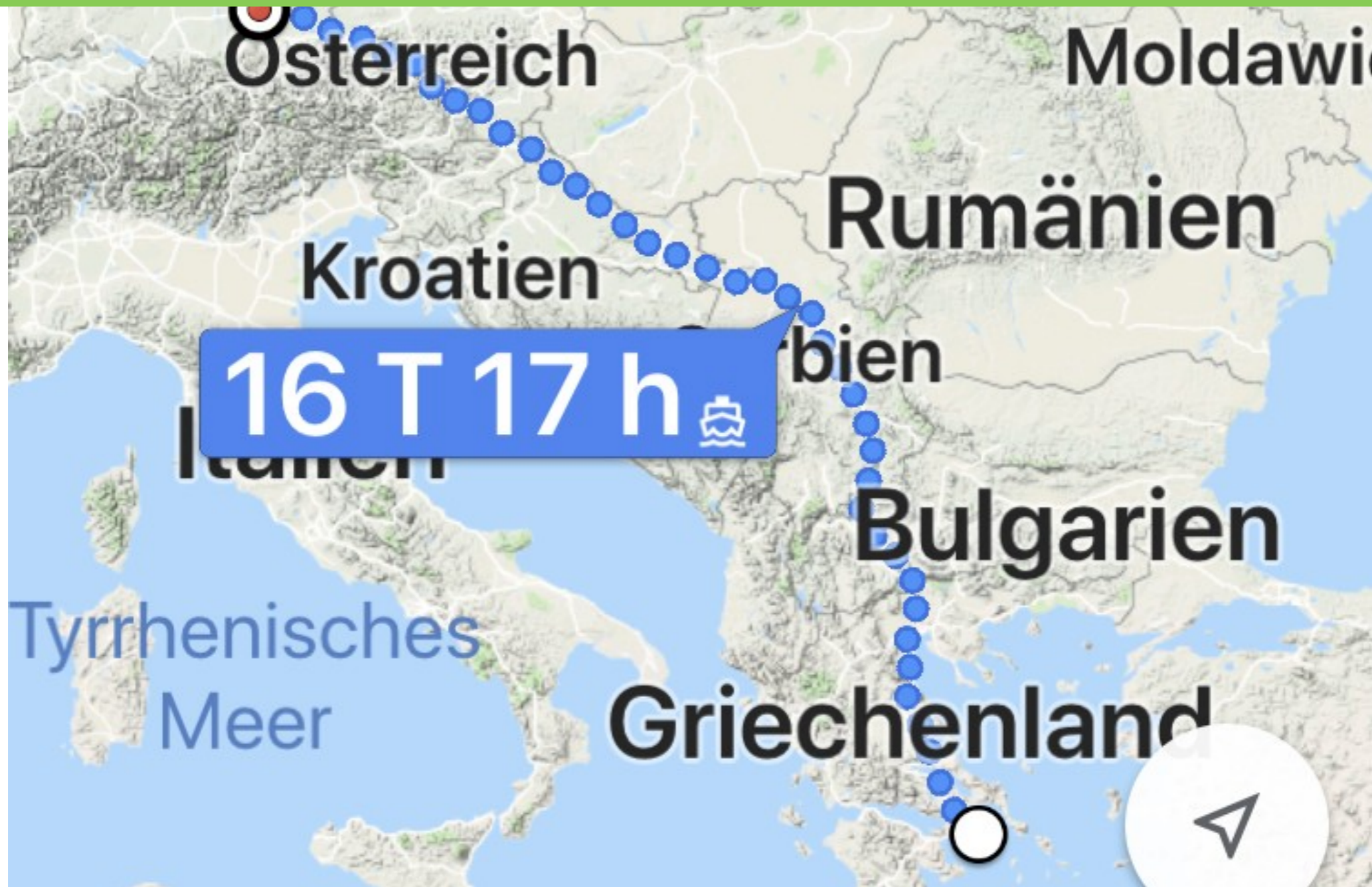


The way from Greece to Germany the family walked, which included hiding in forests, etc. , but didn't affect the child, as the father carried it on his back.

The parents though, were desperate & tense & exhausted, walking many nights through the pouring autumn rain in the Balkan mountains & hiding during daytime

▪

Athens/Greece to Munic/Germany



ATHENS>MUNIC 18 DAYS WALK over 2000 km

16 T 17 h (1.951 km) !



Flight-Motivation :

-The father had worked for the US-troops and was now threatened by the Taliban

(His Job was to enter suspicious houses first, in order to protect the american soldiers).

Family:

Both parents grew up in refugee-camps in Pakistan

Traditional collectivistic-hierarchic family-system, everybody living in the same house.

Arranged marriage amongst distant cousins

Both parents had no schooling, father learnt by himself Basic Skills & some english

Father:

- youngest, the "good boy " of his widowed mother, supporting the Family
- he proudly reports he never stopped working hard, since he was 8 years old.
- reports to be unhappy by the lack of his wifes appreciation of his enormous efforts and by her lack of love for him .

-he **reports**, without being asked, under tears **to have beaten his wife for the first time in Germany** and emphasizes very much **how deeply he is opposed to physical violence** ("not once I raised my hand against my sisters")

-reports of the **promise to his dying mother to bring the boy into safety**

-**Works** in a german bakery from **04:00 AM to 16:00 PM** without a break & proudly reports his bosses appreciation "**best worker**"

Mother :

age difference 15 years, brides age 20+.

She reports to be unhappy about the **forced separation from her mother and sisters** by the migration .

Asked for **marital violence** , she **denies**.

She feels **no positive affection for her son & feels guilty**

She reports that the **father shouts at the boy & her**, because he is **disturbing the fathers rest** after work

Boy :

-**extremely restless**, always in motion, eyes searching, **seeks adult attention every few minutes**, also of before unknown pediatrician, **obvious speech-deficit** at first sight , good in eye-contact, else physically healthy

-**Diagnoses: ADHD**, developmental-**speech-deficit** in both languages, suspected **PTSD** (survival states)

-**Therapies**: special kindergarden, **logotherapy**, ADHD-Therapy with **MPH** first declined by parents , later successful , several stationary **behavioural-therapeutic** interventions in our social-pediatric-center with **intensive parental** instructions .

Problems:

- parents didn't cooperate "not to loose their reputation "**
- mother unfriendly, like petrified**
- father exhausts himself working, to make sure he can stay & to feed his extended family & pay back their dept for the flight**

THE STORY IN BETWEEN (4 YEARS)

Over the years the mother gives us more details, always letting us **promise not to let the husband know**, what she told us .

-Violence of fathers brother & **fathers promise** to dying grandmother were important **motives to flee**

Both parents explain in separate sessions, **why they keep up an unhappy marriage :**

-for the boys sake & out of fear of deportation in case of divorce

-Mother in depression

-learnt after arrival that her husbands elder brother battered his wife to death

-wakes at night from vital fear , sleeps in different room

-was stalked by an afghan camp-neighbour & afraid husband would hold HER responsible for it

-was forbidden by husband **to leave the room**, even to see the afghan woman next door , **felt isolated**

-marital violence continued, wife reports that the **trigger** is her complaints, that he sends **money** to his family for things like cars, etc.

BUT in Afghanistan, he was a good husband, who never was violent

-secretly but strongly objects to leave the camp , as a private home would lack witness to husbands violence

Father under pressure :

- Demand of **paying debt** for flight-expenses, pressure also by wifes family
- Need to **feed his own siblings in Afghanistan**
- Lack of female appreciation** (sex?)
- postponed grieve** over his mothers death
- Loss of social position in society** as a man & head of the family
- Sleep-deprivation & exhaustion**
- Frustration & shame over boys difficulties**
- Shame over his own violence**
- Fear of deportation** (fear of threath by Taliban& his elder brother)

Afghanistan was **declared a safe Country**

German government changed policy & started deporting afghans under political pressure of the population, after repeatedly young german girls got raped, stabbed, etc. by young afghan men.

-Boy ~ trying to keep the rest of HIS world together :

-loss of significant others (lived with **Grandmother & aunt** , parents came once a month for a few days)

-sequential repetitive trauma : lifelong witness (& victim?) to uncles & later marital daily massive violence & later peer-violence

-traumatising journey with traumatized parents, who had not been parenting him before & were not able to show empathy

-Inability to communicate by speech-developmental disorder, then language-bareer & again trauma & shame

-hardly tolerated, certainly not understood by **both parents, isolated in Peergroup**

-triggered easily by any suspected aggression (SURVIVAL STATES IN PTSD)

-strongly attempting to keep the parents together & to unconsciously attract professional helpers by unwanted behaviour .

the Hasara are an ethnic and religious minority of 8 million, exposed to persecution since th 16th century



Success:

-parents learn **German for Basic Communication**

-boy **developes well** & stabilizes under **intensive diverse therapeutic measures.**

- **mother profits from psychiatric intervention & medication** she received in the "day-clinic", which she attended during several clinical stays of her son

Mother & child start bonding, trusting and supporting -each other, whilst the father stays excluded. Boy **wouldnt sleep without the mother.**

-**marital violence can finally be stopped** by alerting the father of the legal consequences, including deportation. Mother mentions then **first time**, that the **father "does'nt beat the boy any more** - even before he stopped beating her

HAPPY ENDINGS

OR

ALL OVER AGAIN ?

-long phase of things going better

-unexpectedly excluded from school

-intolerably violent behaviour towards other kids from the same camp.

-being questioned for the reason he answers

" he looked at me".

What had happened ?

SEXUAL ASSAULT by an older african boy in the camp

-mother tried to complain, but was declined or not believed by the professional help-network
-father didn't intervene not to stir trouble

-boy made the mother buy him a toy-police-uniform & toy-guns , which he carried even at night

-boy wants to become a policeman

Why does it take 4 years to get all this information ?

-alienation & shame

-insecure perspectives

-high economic pressure

-different concept of privacy and responsibilities

CONCLUSIONS

What justifies conclusions and general recomondations from a "Single Story " ?

Nothing , but the knowledge of many similar "Single Stories"

**EUROPE A SAVE
HARBOUR ?**

WINNINGS

political
&
material
safety

~

versus

LOSSES

-alienation & depotencation by
language-/ culture-barrier

-Loss of social/parental competencies & social
resources & self-esteem

-Re-traumatising repeated interrogation & insecure
perspectives

-Re-traumatising multicultural settings in European
refugee-camps

-Breakup of families by government policy

-Shift social hierarchy/loss of self-esteem , culture-gap &
evolving conflicts within the family

-shame & irritation by felt disrespect of professionals &
significant others & host-society

CONCLUSIONS

- More research** is needed on the **impact of transgenerational trauma on child-development & measures to limit its harm**
- parental empowerment plays a central role - "different reaction for different challenges "**
- going back to the **parents own childhood-memory, without shaming their family, can be helpful** "how did you feel? what would have helped you. in a similar situation?"

CONCLUSIONS

-**harsh measures** must be distinguished from **battering** & neglect without missing a **clear anti-violent message** to the perpetrator

-**how** would the child's disorder be seen & **who** would be responsible **in their culture to take care of it** & who takes care of it **now**?

-parents must learn, that a **different challenge/environment/time/life-goal needs a different reaction**

GOVERNMENTS NEEDS TO BE PRESSURISED TO IMPROVE THE LIVING-CIRCUMSTANCE

#NichtMeineLager



FR.DE

„Krankmachende Lebensbedingungen“
- Ärzte der Welt zieht sich aus Ankerz...

As we cannot easily help with the outer circumstances,
we need to **teach the families coping strategies**



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"CHILDREN IN ARMED CONFLICT"

**"What is wrong with that boy ?
PTSD? ADHD?
or other psychiatric disorder ?**

- transgenerational case study
- complexity of behavioral disorder
- 5 year old Child-Refugee
- Country, war-zone for 40 years

-majority of Refugee-Children cope well

-integration of some child-refugees into German Society in its complexity often exhausts the understanding & capacities of parents & of child-occupationalals .

-some Refugee-Children are getting excluded from, otherwise obligatory, activities like visiting of public schools for violent behaviour .

Wellmeaning, otherwise well trained, child professionals, have difficulties in dealing with those children and their parents .

-Child-occupationals

-concept of culture-difference and monotrauma,

-neglect the transgenerational aspects of a lacking parental resilience & its consequences for bonding

-neglect the chronically depriving & traumatising environment of multicultural refugee-camps in Europe, as well as an uncertain legal status,

-cannot even guess the evolving psychodynamics impairing their successful work for the child-refugees.

-case study pointing out the many layers of transgenerational, as well as sequential personal traumata

-key to understanding & resolving antisocial behavioral patterns of child refugees.

- children from school-entry on, socialised in an alien host-culture**
- parents, not connected to the child's new environment, deprived of their natural parental competencies,**
- leads to additional alienation, conflict, isolation within the child's family.**

Methods : interdisciplinary longterm

(4 years) ambulant and stationary
follow-up, along with medical,
psychological, social care in our
social pediatric centre.

For refugee-families the **building of trust** with professionals is a big challenge,

-needs to be met with the **help of trained "Language- and Culture-Translators"**, as well as **practical support and parental education.**

Trust is the key to successful work.

**Professional & cultural/political
background knowledge is a condition
needed**

**to ask the right questions to get
helpful answers from the parents &
child**

**-helps our understanding instead of
mere advising .**

Conclusions :

To successfully work with difficult child-refugees

a welltrained **interdisziplinary, intercultural team** with a an open mind, a big heart & **plenty of resources** is needed,

-deeper **understanding** of the **families history** and psychodynamics should be approached.

Missing the point of understanding & supporting of the parents in their parental responsibility,

the child is loosing the parental backup it needs to be resilient .

As political development of the last years showed ,

it is **of critical importance** to understand and **support these children for their own sake,**

as well as for **social peace of society** in a globalizing world.