

Success Story

Rescuing potential victim of trafficking by Tirana Different & Equal Mobile Unit

In September, Different & Equal made it possible to identify and rescue a boy, a potential victim of trafficking.

- "I was threatened, forced to distribute narcotics and to steal. I was sleeping on the street, and had not spoken to my relatives for some time. There were some boys older than me, who taught me how to steal bicycles.

These are the words of Ben (to protect his identity, not his real name) who is 17 years old and with whom the Tirana Mobile Unit came into contact. Ben comes from a family with severe social problems. His father had died, his mother had abandoned him at an early age and left the country, and his legal custody passed to a relative. However, his relationship with the relative has been difficult and Ben often ran away, ending up on the streets in Tirana and forced to beg. Here, he got to know older boys, who stole, were drug users and were suspected of distributing narcotics.

- "I was often threatened psychologically and physically abused by the older boys with whom I used to hang out."

For more than a year he has not been to school and has begun to show aggressive behaviour. Together, Tirana Mobile Unit and a child protection worker contacted Ben and talked to him, gained his trust and inclusion in the programme and provided him with the organisation's assistance and means of reintegration. Currently, Ben is being supported with the full package of assistance based upon his needs, e.g. medical and legal assistance, counselling, psycho-social support and basic needs. Meanwhile, attempts are being made to provide him with a professional course and to find part-time work for him.

Different & Equal Mobile Unit operates in Tirana and it is one of four mobile units tasked to identify and rescue victims of trafficking. The Units are tasked to also help people they come in contact with, to exercise their rights for protection.