



GOUVERNEMENT

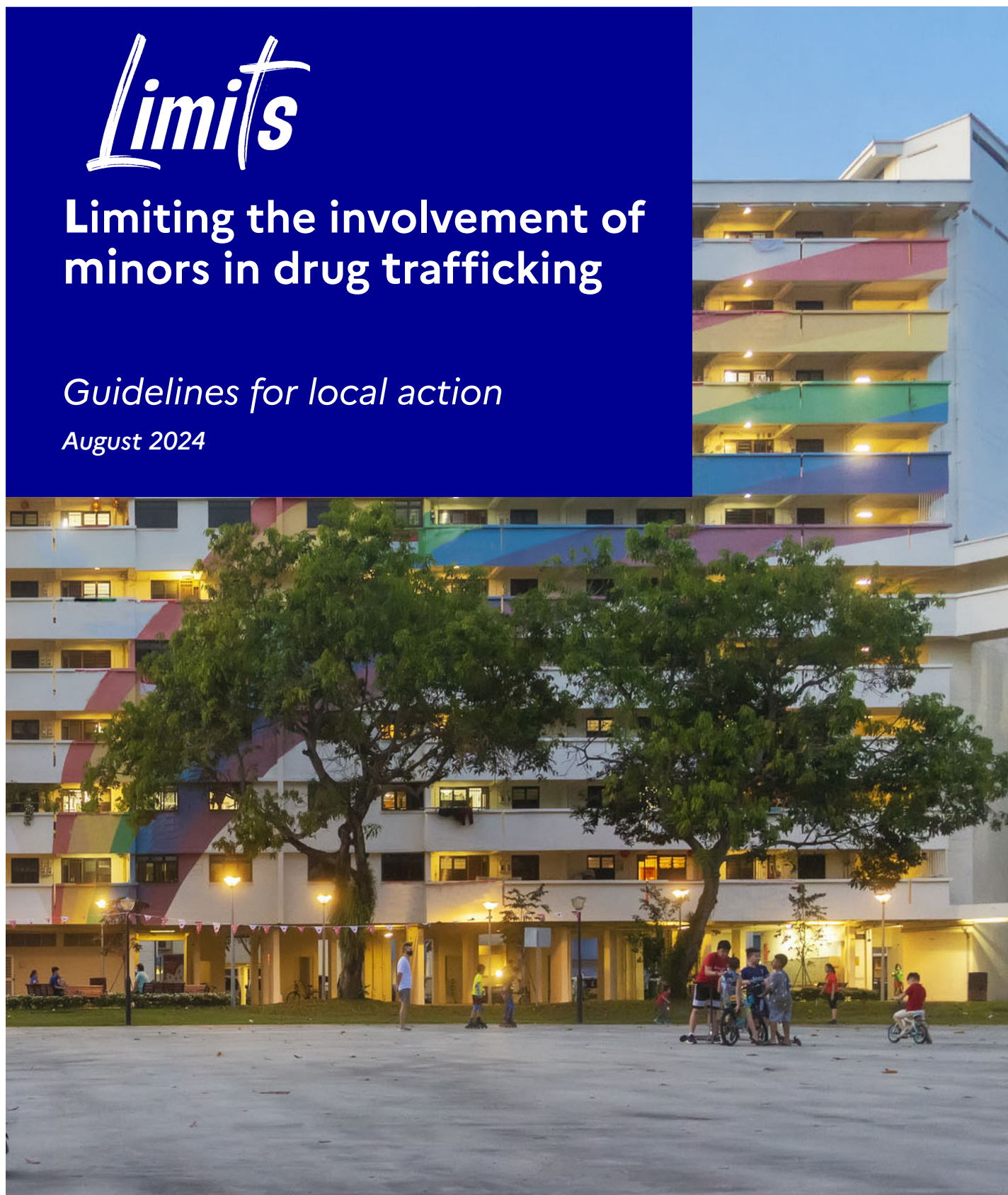
Liberté
Égalité
Fraternité

Limits

Limiting the involvement of minors in drug trafficking

Guidelines for local action

August 2024



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INTRODUCTION

For many professionals, the growth of the criminal networks orchestrating drug trafficking in France has never been greater. One of the consequences is that minors are being recruited to provide a workforce that has become essential to the operation of these organisations. To tackle this problem, in October 2020 the French Interministerial Mission for Combating Drugs and Addictive Behaviours (MILDECA) decided to launch an experimental project called LIMITS (Limiter l'Implication des Mineurs dans les Trafics de Stupéfiants - Limiting the Involvement of Minors in Drug Trafficking), in cooperation with three towns (Sarcelles, Loos and Lille), government departments and a number of local stakeholders. The aim of this three-year project was to lay the foundations for a local, multi-partner prevention scheme, consistent with the 2018-2022 national mobilisation plan against addictive behaviour, the crime prevention strategy, the anti-trafficking plan and numerous other public policies. The MILDECA has also commissioned the CESDIP (Sociological Research Centre on Criminal Law and Institutions)¹ to monitor the deployment of LIMITS and draw initial lessons from it.

In January 2024, in response to the concerns of many local councillors, MILDECA launched a national call for projects aimed at municipalities and inter-municipal authorities wishing to take action in this area. Drawing on feedback from the pilot areas and the work carried out by the CESDIP, this document is primarily intended for the successful local authorities and their local partners. Its aim is to provide guidance and help disseminate best practices, highlighting the risks and pitfalls as well as promising avenues for the success of these new projects supported by MILDECA.

The guidelines have been divided into four sections:

- 1- The organisation of the project and the initial stages, which are essential for establishing shared guidelines.**
- 2- Actions likely to be carried out with young people.**
- 3- Actions that may benefit families.**
- 4- Actions that concern the environment in the broadest sense and can mobilise a large number of citizens.**

Each section includes points of reference and knowledge, as well as examples of actions. Appendices supplement the main text. Finally, these guidelines are intended to be simple: the solutions are essentially local and rely on the knowledge, commitment and joint work of many professionals, which LIMITS aims to strengthen.

Lastly, the concise nature of the text means that statements and categorisations have to be made. We are aware that the reality of each region is unique, diverse and more nuanced.

¹ The CESDIP was tasked by MILDECA in 2020 with monitoring the trial, which began in two, then three areas (Loos, Sarcelles, then Lille in 2021). Under the fourfold supervision of the CNRS, the Ministry of Justice, the Université de Versailles-Saint-Quentin-en-Yvelines (Université Paris-Saclay) and Cergy Paris Université (CYU), the centre monitored the development and implementation of the LIMITS action plans, culminating in an evaluation highlighting the implementation processes, as well as the obstacles and levers in the local implementation of measures to prevent young people from becoming involved in trafficking. The evaluation was conducted under the direction of Fabien Jobard, director of research at the CNRS and chairman of the scientific board of the French Observatory of Drugs and Addictive Tendencies (OFDT). For more information: <https://www.cesdip.fr>



01

ORGANISING AND SHARING
AN ASSESSMENT TO CHOOSE
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01 ORGANISING AND SHARING AN ASSESSMENT TO CHOOSE THE MAIN PRIORITIES OF THE PROJECT

The successful towns in the MILDECA 2024 call for projects demonstrated, through their applications, a strong commitment and a good level of knowledge about the involvement of minors in drug trafficking. However, the action plan must allow for the reinforcement of local mobilisation and the achievement of tangible results, by creating a shared vision and commitment among all of the partners.

1.1 MANAGEMENT BY THE LOCAL AUTHORITY, WITH SUPPORT FROM THE PREFECTURE AND MILDECA

With the support of MILDECA and the departmental prefecture, both signatories to the agreement, the **mayor or chairman of the inter-municipal authority** steers the project. He/she entrusts the operational work to a **coordinator**, who may be attached to the mayor's office or to a department.

This coordinator, recruited for their skills in prevention and with a good knowledge of safety issues and trafficking, is responsible for steering and coordinating the project. The challenge is to be able to work with all the institutional stakeholders as well as associations and social workers, to avoid posturing and to build a shared approach, which will necessarily challenge certain habits and preconceptions. Project leadership must be **strong and hands-on** - because the task is challenging - but it must also be **subtle and facilitative** ensuring that every stakeholder finds their place while showing respect for all.

The coordinator must be sufficiently **available** to steer the project, facilitate the development and monitoring of the action plan, mobilise the partners, listen to their expectations and proposals, respond to them, and ensure coordination and communication. The time devoted to the LIMITS project is particularly significant during the first few months and then decreases once the project is understood and shared with the partners. However, the coordinator must ensure continuity of action throughout the project.

The role of the LIMITS coordinator:

- Identify all the relevant partners and mobilise them,
- Present the project to the partners (with the support of MILDECA and the prefecture), explain it and ensure their support for the project, in particular by showing each of them their 'interest in taking action' to prevent trafficking (the interests may differ from one partner to another),
- Remain open to innovative ideas and proposals from project partners, in a spirit of co-construction of the action plan,
- Lead the partnership and maintain the commitment of the partners throughout the project,
- Enable the development of a practical action plan, including a schedule and expected deliverables, and monitor its implementation,
- Prepare follow-up meetings and steering committees, in collaboration with MILDECA and the prefecture, and provide regular qualitative and financial reports.

Throughout the project, the LIMITS coordinator must endeavour to:

- Develop a shared culture among the professionals involved in the project and enable

them to get to know each other and understand each stakeholder's specific approach to intervention,

- Equip the players in contact with young people (social work/national education authorities) with the skills needed to address the issue of trafficking and its evolutions, as well as the specific problems associated with the involvement of young people in criminal networks,
- Enable partners to discuss local issues on a regular basis,
- Encourage and facilitate the establishment, including the financial aspects, of this multi-partner project.

Important points

- While the project can be 'embodied' by a clearly identified person within the local authority, there is also a risk of a single agent taking ownership of the experiment, imposing his or her own vision of things and limiting the development of a genuine partnership,
- A lack of leadership can lead to partners working in silos, preventing any overall vision and any consistency between actions and stakeholders,
- Cross-functionality must first be established within the local authority itself, between the various departments and services: the network of social mediation agents employed by the town where these exist; the network of neighbourhood centres or 'mediation and citizen centres' (the names vary); units responsible for community life and community activities; but also the department responsible for GUSP (local urban and social management); the departments responsible for health (mental health), parenting, education, children and young people, CCAS (local social welfare centre) and professional integration are also essential. All these departments, even in small local authorities, do not necessarily have a thorough knowledge of each other and do not always work systematically together or in collaboration due to a lack of identification of common issues. It is the role of the LIMITS coordinator to identify and structure these partnerships internally.

1.2 PARTNERS

Apart from MILDECA and the prefecture, the local authority (the coordinator) must quickly identify and contact **the partners**, i.e. those who play an essential role in the assessment phase, the choice of guidelines and, later, the running of the project. While some stakeholders will have no issue in committing to the LIMITS approach, others may be more reticent. It will then be a matter of emphasising the shared objectives (combating insecurity on the one hand or supporting young people and their families on the other) and their specific interest in taking action. Some partners may also be able to provide co-financing for certain costly initiatives.

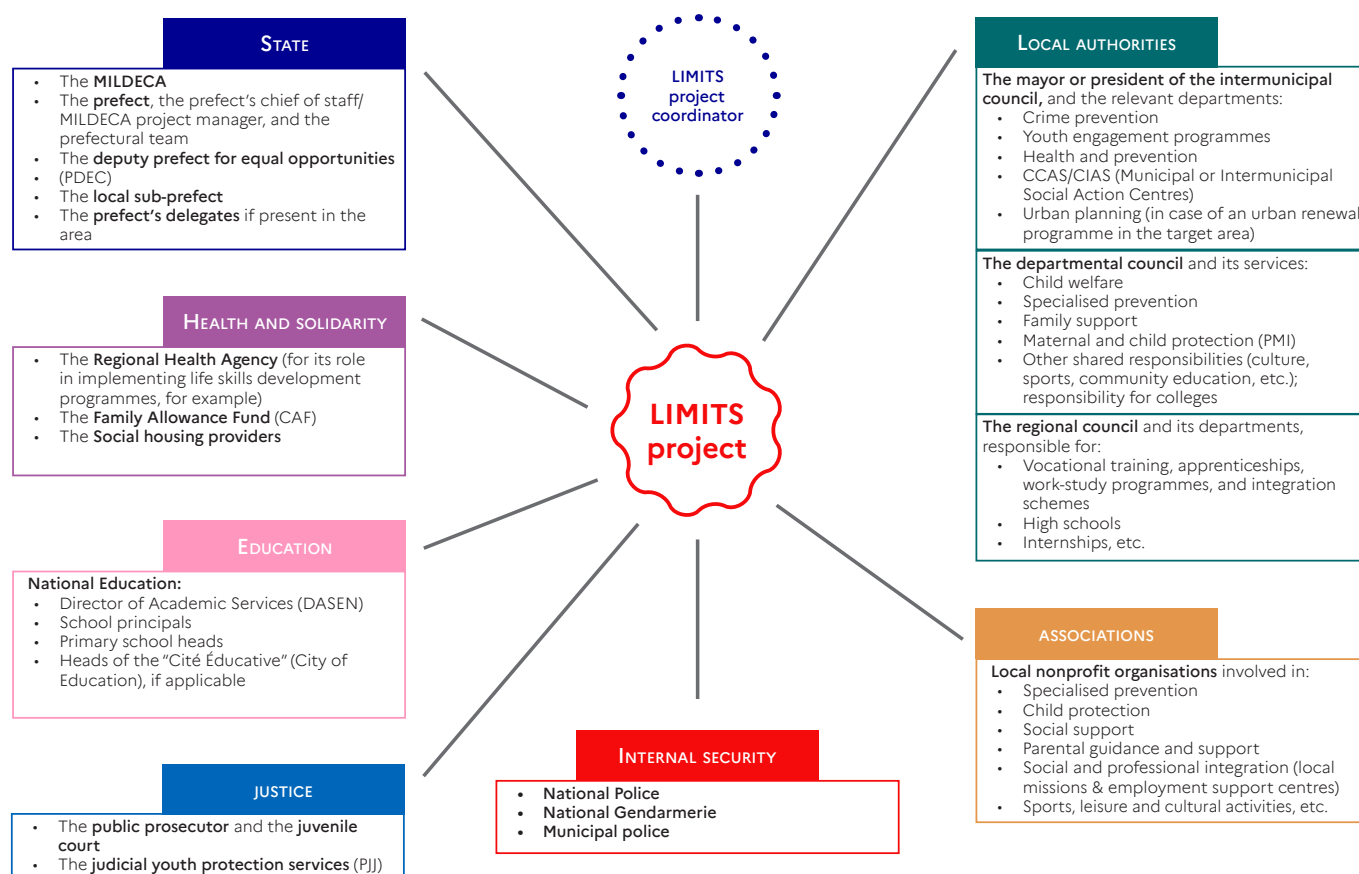
The diagram below shows the main partners required to implement the LIMITS projects.

From this phase onwards, or at a later stage, the choice may be made to involve several other partners. Stakeholders in Education, mediation associations, urban policy actors, and those involved in integration, culture, and sports... From the start of the project, they must at least be informed about the implementation of the LIMITS initiative and, where applicable, be involved in its governance or certain actions as key players in prevention, identifying at-risk minors, and supporting their integration. Some of these are crucial and were probably not sufficiently mobilised during the initial trials:

- ▶ Housing provider networks;
- ▶ Juvenile court judges;
- ▶ Police and gendarmerie social workers (ISCG).

Depending on the area, the list of partners is adapted to the stakeholders present and mobilised.

LIMITS project partners



1.3 ASSESSMENT: FOR A SHARED COMMITMENT AND UNDERSTANDING

Bringing together the above-mentioned partners in a governance body (in the form of a steering committee), who act together on their determination to tackle the issue of minors' involvement in trafficking, is in itself a first result of the LIMITS project. **Each one, with the information available to them, contributes to the development of a shared assessment of the situation, and then of the action plan.**


The purpose of the assessment will be to identify weak signals and characterise the reality of trafficking, to understand the determining factors in the involvement of minors and their vulnerabilities, to choose the areas of the territory and the target groups (young people themselves, families, local residents) on which efforts should focus in particular. There is no need to conduct a specific, costly and time-consuming study. Access to data from the internal security and justice forces on trafficking can be useful in establishing orders of magnitude as to the involvement of young people. However, not having this information should not be an obstacle to drawing up a relevant situational assessment. A quick and effective assessment can consist of one or more meetings involving the stakeholders in the first circle shown in the diagram above. The aim is to share the information and expertise available to each professional in order to draw up a summary and make it easier to determine priorities (in terms of target groups, regions, types of action to be taken, etc.), and then actions. It should be noted that national data is easily accessible and helps to put certain preconceived notions regarding young people into perspective².

²Key figures for youth 2024, INJEP: <https://injep.fr/wp-content/uploads/2024/07/Chiffres-cles-jeunesse-2024.pdf>

Examples of questions to guide the assessment:

- What is the target area for the LIMITS scheme? What are the main reasons for this choice ?
- What are the implications of trafficking for the daily lives of local residents? What impact does it have on the public space? What impact does it have on peace and safety? What is the level of violence? How commonplace are drug trafficking activities among the general public and in the perceptions of young people ?
- What factors lead some minors to become involved in drug trafficking? What are the main risk factors for entry into the drug trade? What are the warning signs of their involvement? Do they come from the neighbourhood, the surrounding area or other areas? Are other 'vulnerable' people recruited (young people in irregular situations, unaccompanied minors, people with disabilities)? Quels sont les freins (objectifs ou ressentis) pour s'attaquer à cette question sur le territoire ?
- What are the obstacles (objective or perceived) to tackling this issue in the area ?
- What existing measures could be useful? What has already been tried ?
- Who are the key stakeholders in the neighbourhood or area (associations) on whom the LIMITS scheme could rely? During this phase, the aim is also to **share existing resources and inform all the partners about the various schemes** that may help or the innovative approaches that have been tried. This stage should not be neglected. Experience has shown that many stakeholders are unaware of each other's skills and limitations. The project must enable better coordination and the creation of a shared partnership culture.

Building a shared culture throughout the project



Each stakeholder involved in LIMITS, regardless of their experience and skills, takes part in the process with their own **perceptions of trafficking** and its low-level operatives. In practice, the image of young people (and their families) is often reduced to stereotypes: victims versus delinquents, unable to escape their situation, solely driven by money, irresponsible, disengaged, etc.

It is important to avoid an over-simplistic view by recalling some of the major characteristics of trafficking and the reasons why minors become involved ([see Appendix 1](#)). The aim is to **share knowledge and forge a shared culture and discourse** that will facilitate assessment, the formulation of an action plan and its implementation, particularly as regards interactions with young people. The credibility of the project and its success depend on it.

This requirement may call for structured training sessions and discussions.

1.4 MAKING CHOICES

Following an analysis of the issue and an evaluation of resources, the next step is to set a course and establish priorities to reduce the involvement of minors in trafficking. One option is to focus on **primary prevention aimed at a fairly broad population of minors**. In this case, the main levers to be mobilised are in the educational, sports and social sectors, where strengthening life skills will play a central role. Another option, which complements the first, is to focus on **prevention targeted at particularly vulnerable young people**, or to identify a **problematic area** on which to focus efforts and synergies between stakeholders, and to demonstrate inventiveness.

The action plan will be shaped by these priorities.



Exchanging information, a sensitive subject

Targeted prevention - or even support for young people already involved - tends towards the implementation of individualised responses for young people and families who are known to certain professionals. This type of action requires the sharing of information concerning these young people and their families, which cannot be done in a steering committee format.

The conditions for exchanging such information must be provided for within an ad hoc group, whose operation may, where appropriate, be governed by a charter intended to reassure both professionals and beneficiaries. This charter must take account of regulations relating to professional secrecy for certain professions and the sharing of certain confidential information, strictly limited to what is necessary to know in the context of supporting people (French Social Action and Family Code, Public Health Code, Education Code).

1.5 COMMUNICATION

The LIMITS coordinator must be aware of a number of external communication issues surrounding the project. **Success will also depend on the image projected of the actions carried out.** A certain level of investment and professionalism is required, with the help of the communication services of the local authority and the prefecture. The following questions should be considered :

- ▶ How can LIMITS be publicised and promoted while avoiding simplistic representations ?
- ▶ How can we show that prevention measures targeting a small number of young people at risk are useful, even if the results are not guaranteed ?
- ▶ How can we make residents aware of the efforts and investments that are being made to benefit the residents of certain neighbourhoods, without causing misunderstanding on the part of other residents ?
- ▶ How can the actions implemented and certain results be highlighted ?

1.6 MONITORING AND EVALUATION

With the help of the prefecture and the MILDECA, the project coordinator will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the actions, monitoring achievements and financial commitments. This monitoring is essential in order to refocus the project, if necessary, as it is rolled out.

Several bodies will need to be convened to ensure that the action programme is implemented. While the steering committee should bring together the project's main partners to agree on the main priorities and actions to be taken, a number of working groups can be organised to ensure that the programme is implemented on the ground. These groups can be created on an ad hoc basis within the project or be integrated into existing bodies that would incorporate LIMITS within their framework.

With regard to evaluation itself, it is advisable to plan, from the moment the action plan is finalised, to assess the relevance and outcomes of a few actions or measures, particularly the most innovative ones.



02 ACTION STRATEGIES FOR MINORS

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This chapter provides some examples of how to address various factors that contribute to the involvement of minors in trafficking. It outlines possible approaches to offer alternative prospects to those who appear particularly at risk.

2.1 COMBATING THE ATTRACTIVENESS OF CRIMINAL NETWORKS AND THE SENSE OF IMPUNITY

2.1.1 Lifting the taboos surrounding the reality of trafficking and shattering the myths

The cultural universe of some minors, based on series, films, video games and video clips, creates an imaginary world of trafficking and spreads a number of preconceived ideas, fed by the reality or mythology associated with the trafficking they may witness on a daily basis. At the same time, there are few opportunities to address these issues objectively. Even professionals often struggle to find an opportunity to discuss these complex issues.

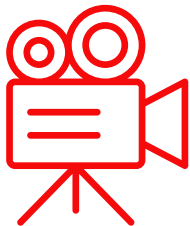
To **address these preconceived ideas and change young people's perceptions**, professionals must have shared knowledge on the subject ([see Appendix 1](#)) and, subsequently, levers for communication and exchange with young people and their families.

The 'outreach' approach and intervention through public participation are essential levers for enabling the exchange and dissemination of this counter-discourse among young people and those around them.

Peer prevention is a valuable tool when dealing with young people, particularly those who are the most vulnerable to the temptations associated with the mythology of trafficking. In fact, while social construction is partly achieved through confrontation with adults, whether parents or professionals, it is also achieved through contact with peers who claim the same identity and with whom we share a strong sense of belonging. In this type of approach, everyone is an '**expert**' on what they are experiencing and can therefore help their peers to acquire the skills and resources they need to change their behaviour.

* EXAMPLES FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS

LIMITS Sarcelles: creation of video clips to deconstruct the myths associated with trafficking



In partnership with the Project 214 association, around twenty young people were able to take part in the creation of video clips aimed at raising awareness of the risks associated with drug use and involvement in trafficking, and deconstructing the preconceived ideas associated with it. The aim of the project is to get young people involved in the prevention initiatives that concern them, by organising workshops to develop their own prevention tools.

Produced by young people for young people, the six videos cover the following topics:

- ▶ *Clashes and territorial issues*
- ▶ *A mother's response to her child's involvement in trafficking*

- ▶ The positive role of an older brother who has reintegrated
- ▶ The responsibility of the buyer
- ▶ Health issues related to drug use
- ▶ Participation in drug trafficking: a dead end

This tool is accessible to all, with instructions for use to enable discussion with young people on the issues of easy money, peer influence, dangerousness, the feeling of impunity and the positive image of the drug dealer, and to question their perceptions.

Link to the tool : <http://www.lepoleressources.fr/kit-LIMITS-outil-pour-lutter-contre-lentree-dans-les-trafics-de-stupefiant>

LIMITS Lille: forum theatre to tackle the issue of drug trafficking

Among the many factors involved in drug trafficking, the fascination of some young people with the image of the drug dealer may play a role. However, studies show that deconstructing the image of the all-powerful 'dealer' can help to change it and make young people more aware of the risks they are taking. To achieve this, we propose using intervention theatre as a tool for reflection, to highlight the manipulative practices of drug dealers and work on resisting peer pressure, assertiveness and self-esteem.

The company MASCARADE was asked by the city of Lille to develop a play for young people in middle schools (6th/5th grade students). At the same time, the prevention club identifies young people during the play and then provides them with individual or group support after the performance. To ensure long-term work on this issue, the partners involved in the prevention club have been included in the initiative to continue engaging young people.

The LIMITS coordinator is heavily involved in supporting the theatre company and checking that the content of the play and the methods of intervention and questioning are in line with expectations in terms of deconstructing preconceived ideas specific to trafficking.

As with all school-based initiatives, the French Ministry of Education must be involved, in particular through school heads and educational teams, so that these activities can be included in learning sessions and teachers can be informed of the issues involved. The projects can be linked to the secondary school curriculum. These actions have an impact if they are followed up over time; one-off interventions with no preparation or follow-up should be avoided.



LIMITS Loos: implementation of «justice and us» workshops to combat the sense of impunity and show the reality of trafficking

A re-enactment of a criminal trial relating to drug trafficking was organised for several classes of pupils in the 8th grade of a middle school in Loos and their parents, thanks to the joint efforts of the LIMITS coordinator, the school, the association 'Jeune et Citoyenneté' ('Youth and Citizenship') and the Lille public prosecutor's office.

In addition, the pupils attended hearings and visited the Lille judicial court in the presence of a representative of the public prosecutor. At the end of the visit, several pupils submitted internship requests for their 9th grade internship placements at the Lille Judicial Court.

As part of the organisation of this initiative, the coordinator worked in conjunction with the public prosecutor and the head of the school and his educational team, who were involved at every stage.



Production of communication tools - risks to be avoided

Forum theatre, the production of videos and other communication tools aimed at young people and their parents can be useful in changing perceptions and combating preconceived ideas about easy money and the idealisation of trafficking, but they must also be handled with care.

There are several points to bear in mind with regard to the content of the messages broadcast :

The script of the play or the video scenario must be developed in advance by all LIMITS partners to avoid reinforcing misconceptions or, despite the initial intention, creating an attractive image of drug dealing or drug consumption. For example: the way in which the figure of the dealer is presented, the words used, the use of images showing products or scenes of consumption.

Support from prevention specialists is necessary to avoid incitement to use drugs or arousing curiosity about dealing.

These tools must be backed up and form part of an overall approach :

This project-based approach helps young people develop a civic culture and skills that they can effectively apply in new situations. As such, they have more impact than simply watching videos.

A prevention approach is a long-term process that requires more than one-off interventions. Simply taking part in a forum theatre activity or showing prevention video clips is not enough on its own.

The play must be prepared with the young people (and ideally at a different time, with the involvement of parents or other adults), anticipating any support needs that may emerge afterwards.

The use of educational videos for prevention purposes can be useful in structured teaching scenarios that include interaction and questions from young people about the concepts presented in the video. The aim is to enable them to move beyond the position of passive spectator. To guide their attention and engage them, the viewing experience should be truly interactive, and time should be taken to conclude with the key messages to take away.

2.2 OPENING UP POSSIBILITIES AND PROMOTING SUCCESS

Minors, particularly the most vulnerable, may find it difficult to project themselves into the future, especially in terms of career prospects. In order to support young people in their integration, it is essential to show them the world of possibilities, and to remind them that drug trafficking is not a future project or a job like any other.

Initiatives to provide more information about local training opportunities and to promote positive career paths are important. The pathways offered must be seen as realistic by these young people, with tangible prospects of remuneration.

The local authorities selected as part of LIMITS 2024 will have to demonstrate creativity and innovation to propose new avenues of work and invent ways of opening up possibilities, propose concrete alternatives to trafficking (through training or employment) and highlight positive pathways and inspiring role models.

Some of these initiatives may be aimed at all young people (in a local secondary school or neighbourhood), while others will be aimed more at those considered to be particularly at risk.

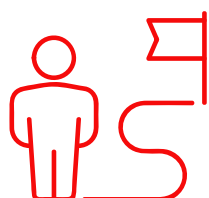
* EXAMPLES FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS

LIMITS Sarcelles: a better future, ambition days: proposing alternatives to trafficking and promoting positive role models

The aim of these days, which were aimed at all 10th grade pupils at a secondary school in Sarcelles, was to show young people that it is possible to build a personal pathway without resorting to trafficking, which for some young people can seem inevitable.

Implementation methods

Three-hour workshops are organised for pupils during school hours :



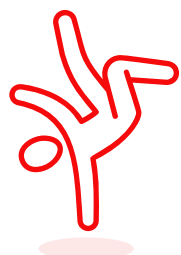
- ▶ 90-minute group presentation led by the "Graine de France" association
- ▶ 90-minute themed workshop with people from a wide range of backgrounds (company directors, students from the Grandes Ecoles, doctors, craftsmen, etc.) who are able to talk about their backgrounds without denying the difficulties and the need for commitment, dedication, hard work and perseverance.

As with any intervention outside the educational community, it must be carried out in conjunction with the teaching teams and in line with the school curriculum.

These initiatives are complementary to the «stay in school week» schemes organised by the French education authorities and departments.

LIMITS Loos: exchange and discovery days: «and you in 2024?»

In Loos, the association L59760 brings together hip-hop and breakdance performers from a wide range of professions: health professionals, the police and the army, and the national education system. Through dance and their sporting and artistic activities, they encourage debate and exchange on the concepts of effort, commitment, perseverance and success, highlighting their own achievements and demonstrating that it is possible.



The LIMITS coordinator is fully committed to organising an event with this association, finding a suitable venue and publicising the initiative to all the partners so as to attract as many young people as possible.

After a first year that saw only modest participation by local residents, the event became better known over the years of the experiment. In 2023, "And You in 2024?" was held in a space previously occupied by drug dealers, at the foot of a council housing tower block, and successfully brought together a large number of residents, children, and teenagers from the neighbourhood.

2.3 THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIFE SKILLS IN YOUNG PEOPLE

To better equip young people against risky behaviours, which in this case could lead them towards criminality, it is necessary to act as early as possible and strengthen their life skills. These will enable them to make other choices, in particular by better managing the pressure of the groups around them or to which they belong or risk belonging.

Risky behaviour, including the use of psychoactive substances (tobacco, alcohol, drugs) and delinquent behaviour such as involvement in drug trafficking, is fuelled by a negative self-image, the influence of peers and the desire to conform to that which is seen as the norm, insufficiently protective family or social environments, as well as multiple demands (whether material, from family, friends or where they live, or immaterial, particularly on social networks).

Acting upstream on these vulnerabilities means enabling young people to effectively resist these

solicitations. This involves enabling them to feel better about themselves, better about others and about their environment. This is the principal objective of prevention programmes based on strengthening life skills.

These prevention programmes are currently recognised as being the most effective against all risky behaviour, even though they have not been specifically tested in the prevention of involvement in trafficking. They have a positive effect on school attendance and achievement, as well as on the school environment. On the basis of these results, the public authorities are providing firm support for the deployment, in all environments where children live, of coordinated programmes to strengthen life skills and their integration into educational projects. These programmes do not target the young people most at risk, but are deployed across a class, a school or a group of schools.



3 Cognitive life skills

Self-confidence
Self-control
Making constructive decisions



3 Emotional life skills

Awareness of emotions and stress
Regulating emotions
Managing stress



3 Social life skills

Constructive communication
Developing constructive relationships
Overcoming difficulties

2.3.1 The implementation of life skills in school environments

The development of life skills in young people has gradually become a priority in a number of youth-related public policies. In August 2022, the government published a ministerial instruction on the national multisectoral strategy for developing life skills in children for the period 2022-2037. Its aim is to define a framework common to all sectors to enable all children to develop their life skills from an early age, as they grow up and in all environments.

[The instruction of August 19, 2022](#)

The implementation of life skills in schools is most often structured around programmes that meet certain criteria, allowing their positive impact on the youngest children to be demonstrated. The French public health authority has published a set of guidelines summarising scientific knowledge on life skills, enabling public decision-makers to identify the key factors in the effectiveness of different programmes, in order to facilitate the development of high-quality interventions.

[The French public health authority guidelines](#)

The evaluations have also identified a number of successful (Unplugged, Good Behavior Game) and promising (ProDAS, Tina & Toni, etc.) programmes for developing life skills in younger children. Most of these programmes are known to the French Ministry of Education and the regional health authorities (ARS), which have been supporting and funding their deployment for several years now.



The National Education Authority and the ARS should be approached to enquire about the schools in which life skills programmes are implemented, the programmes deployed and the local stakeholders responsible for these programmes.

In addition to the implementation of life skills programmes, the French Ministry of Education is planning to introduce empathy classes in nursery and primary schools from September 2024. These sessions will also focus on strengthening the life skills of the youngest children.

[Teaching kit for empathy sessions in schools](#)

[Developing life skills among pupils - ressources EDUSCOL](#)

The SIRENA-CPS website is a resource site bringing together information about life skills development programmes implemented in the regions. This collaborative platform aims to increase knowledge and favourable attitudes towards the development of life skills among professionals and the general public. <https://www.sirena-cps.fr>

2.3.2 Life skills outside school environments: training professionals in contact with young people

Programmes designed to strengthen life skills must also be deployed outside the school environment. The LIMITS experimental project highlighted the significant need for training for professionals and volunteers in contact with young people, in out-of-school settings, to enable them to adapt their practices by integrating life skills to a greater extent for the benefit of the young people in their care. Regardless of the context, boosting self-esteem and critical thinking skills, improving communication and managing emotions all have benefits for individuals and groups.

An avenue worth exploring : life skills in sport with the UNODC's *Line Up, Live Up* programme ([to find out more](#))

* EXAMPLES FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS

LIMITS Loos & Lille: a specific programme created by the PRISME association

Professionals working with young people were quick to point out the need for a better understanding of how young people become involved in drug trafficking, the need to adapt their approach and set up relevant projects at their level.

The target group were professionals working with young people aged 9 to 16, in the fields of prevention, youth work and support for schooling, within the national education system, local authorities and associations working in the field. It is important to reiterate that programmes to strengthen life skills have not been specifically created or tested to prevent involvement in trafficking, but that we consider that such skills, insofar as they make it possible to reduce risky behaviour, may be of interest in terms of primary prevention on a large scale in the area.

The five-day PRISME training course enables professionals to design, implement and assess a project to strengthen life skills. The topics covered during the course are: theoretical and practical aspects of life skills, self-confidence, emotion management, stress management, communication, assertiveness, problem solving and project methodology.

A 'feedback day' is organised six months later to take stock of the projects undertaken, share experiences and difficulties, answer questions and encourage the mobilisation of stakeholders over the long term.

The LIMITS project coordinator is heavily involved in publicising the training, mobilising participants, managing logistics (finding suitable slots and the training room, managing registrations, ensuring follow-up, etc.), organising the feedback day and leading the network of people trained.

At the end of the course, participants are provided with a kit for setting up a practical project.



2.4 SECONDARY PREVENTION: IDENTIFYING AND SUPPORTING YOUNG PEOPLE MOST AT RISK AT RISK

For some young people, the situation immediately gives cause for concern, with a high risk of delinquency and, in particular, of involvement in trafficking. Various factors can be used to assess these risks: the threat of dropping out of school or actually dropping out, the environment of the neighbourhood already involved in trafficking, the family experiencing particular difficulties.

These minors and young adults require specific attention mobilising significant resources and individualised, coordinated work between social and educational workers, and even judicial youth protection and child welfare services. The aim is to provide holistic support (educational, social, administrative, vocational integration, etc.) with a view to overall integration, and to build a long-term pathway with bridges from one system to another, justifying the coordination effort required.

2.4.1 An age group requiring special attention: 13 to 16 year-olds

Adolescents under the age of 16 are subject to compulsory education or training. Even if the student does not yet show clear signs of involvement in trafficking, it is sometimes possible to identify early indicators of disengagement, which can serve as warning signs and risk factors. Secondary schools offer measures to prevent drop-out, absenteeism and temporary or permanent exclusion, adapted to their constraints in conjunction with local stakeholders. The aim is to enable a collective reflection on the different types of difficulties encountered by pupils and the responses to them: the school drop-out prevention group (GPDS), the mission to combat school drop-out (MLDS), the FOQUALE network (training, qualification and employment), the committee for education in health, citizenship and the environment (CESCE), the work of the information and guidance centres (CIO).

Other partnership schemes also exist :

- ▶ The [‘open school’](#) scheme;
- ▶ [Relay schemes](#) (classes, workshops, transitional boarding schools);
- ▶ Schemes for pupils temporarily excluded from school (national education scheme);
- ▶ [City of education](#);
- ▶ [Educational Success Programme](#)
- ▶ [Second Chance Schools](#) (E2C) welcome young people under the age of 26 to help them access vocational training and enter the job market.

2.4.2 16, a pivotal age

Although schooling is no longer compulsory from the age of 16, a training obligation has been introduced for any minor aged between 16 and 18 who has dropped out of the school system, or who is not in employment, education or training. It should be noted that in 2021, 12.8% of 15-29 year-olds were neither in employment, education or training ([INSEE](#)).



A variety of schemes exist for this age group, and they need to be harnessed, coordinated and even adapted in order to experiment with solutions that address as closely as possible the issues identified for these young people, ranging from re-engagement to long-term commitment to a process of integration. The schemes below are given by way of example, but are not exhaustive.

Dynamic integration spaces (EDI)

Facilities dedicated to the re-socialisation of young people facing serious social difficulties through the acquisition of basic skills and the implementation of individualised monitoring, with two fundamental objectives :

- ▶ Identify and remove the main obstacles that hinder or compromise the professional integration of young people by mobilising the EDI's resources and network of partners (accommodation, health, administrative, legal and financial aspects, training, employment, etc.);
- ▶ Encourage the acquisition and development of life skills and cross-disciplinary skills, particularly personal and social skills, necessary for integration, so that young people are able to adhere to the constraints and requirements of a traditional training organisation and/or an employer.

Implemented by voluntary organisations, they are aimed at young people aged between 16 and 25, who are unable to access or remain within so-called conventional integration schemes, due to personal or social difficulties. These people may be referred to the EDIs by local missions, social workers, specialist prevention associations, or judicial youth protection services or child protection organisations working with them.

Local missions

The role of local missions is to promote the professional and social integration of young people aged 16 to 25, particularly those who have left the school system or who are unemployed.

One of the schemes used by the local missions is the Youth Commitment Agreement (CEJ) (successor to the Youth Guarantee). Subject to certain conditions, it is aimed at young people aged 16 to 25 (and people under 30 who are recognised as having a disability). The CEJ is a one-year agreement, which can be extended for up to a further six months, and may include internships, training and civic service. It is backed by a monthly allowance, the amount of which varies according to the beneficiary's age and resources, particularly in relation to their family situation.

It is also a response to the training obligation introduced for any minor aged 16 to 18 who has dropped out of the school system, or who is not in employment, education or training.

Employment integration establishments (EPIDE)

Epidé centres are public integration establishments under the authority of the ministries of employment, urban policy and the armed forces, dedicated to the social and professional integration of young people aged 17 to 25 without a diploma or professional qualification who are having difficulty finding work or training. Offering boarding facilities and a personalised civic and educational pathway, they provide health and social support and a monthly allowance for volunteers. A support contract is also provided for the first three months following entry into employment, consolidating the company's commitment to their long-term integration.

The regional youth integration plan (PRIJ)

Launched in 2018, the PRIJ aims to support the integration of young people aged 16 to 30 who have no opportunities, are disconnected from employment and integration services, and live in priority urban policy neighbourhoods (QPV).

Based on cooperation between all the players on the ground, its aim is to decompartmentalise the integration aid systems by going out to meet the young people concerned in order to build a relationship of trust and develop long-term pathways to success. The PRIJ is not, therefore, an additional scheme but rather a proactive approach based on identifying young people in difficulty in order to offer them individualised pathways leading to appropriate solutions. Tailor-made solutions must be proposed, drawing on the range of existing schemes in the fields of education, sport, culture, health, access to rights, citizenship and social and professional integration.

2.5 PATHWAYS OUT OF DELINQUENCY AND RE-ENGAGEMENT

In the case of young people who are not involved in trafficking but who present risks, or young people who are already involved in trafficking on an occasional basis, even though they have not yet been prosecuted or taken into care by the judicial youth protection services, it may be appropriate to suggest to them (and their parents) ways of avoiding a worsening of the situation or interrupting this pathway towards delinquency and taking a different route.

To this end, there are various schemes that can be used as complementary stages in the educational support process, to both 'hook in' and create the bond of trust needed to set up comprehensive socio-educational support, and to encourage the young person to engage or re-engage in a process of integration.

Breakaway routes

A common tool in child protection and judicial youth protection, those interventions can provide young people in serious difficulty with a time out from their living environment and surroundings. They have a threefold objective: to distance them from their original environment (family and friends), to help them (re)build their lives based on experiential teaching methods and to provide highly individualised support by a team of professionals who live with the young people. **Through a suitably secure framework, they aim to calm and change the behaviour of the young person being cared for.**

In France, the legal framework around those intervention stays is defined by several reglementations, which aim to ensure the safety and well-being of the young participants. The legislation provides a strict framework for reception conditions, staff qualifications and the educational objectives of the stays. Organisations offering such stays must obtain authorisation from the departmental services for youth, popular education and sport (DSDEN) and/or the regional health authority (ARS), depending on the activities on offer and the number of participants.

2.6 MEETING THE FINANCIAL CHALLENGE: GIVING THESE YOUNG PEOPLE ACCESS TO LEGAL PAID EMPLOYMENT

Beyond the myth-busting rhetoric, analysis tends to show that the most powerful lever is money. Preventing young people from becoming involved in trafficking means offering them concrete, desirable alternatives and career prospects, and supporting their reintegration into the legal economy.

The aim is to offer these young people an alternative to trafficking by providing them with flexible solutions that meet two challenges :

- ▶ Reconnecting these young people with a social and professional integration process, and with mainstream services;
- ▶ Enabling them to access legal financial resources (which is also a relevant starting point for support).

Educational work programmes

Educational work programmes are aimed at young people aged 16 and over, who are often at risk of dropping out of school or of any training/integration process. They aim to offer these young people supervised and paid short-term work (such as painting, moving services, catering, basement clearance, furniture assembly, tiling, landscaping, etc.) for a variety of clients (private individuals, municipalities, landlords, associations, businesses, etc.).

Generally run by specialised prevention associations, the educational work project offers, within an

often chaotic trajectory, a work contract that reintegrates young people into the formal system. It is a key space for learning social and professional norms. Its strength also lies in enabling young people to experience the feeling that they are capable of achieving positive things. Educational work projects provide a space for consideration and recognition of their different abilities.

The young people earn money for themselves or to finance a project (a holiday for example), they can also become aware of the importance of their living environment and discover a new world. This can also help local residents to see them in a different light: young people from these neighbourhoods have skills and expertise, can contribute to the community, and work towards achieving their goals.

TAPAJ – Low-threshold employment program

TAPAJ (low-threshold employment program) is a programme run by addictology organisations, offering young people between the ages of 16 and 25 in vulnerable situations comprehensive support and work with daily pay, with no immediate long-term commitment. The aim is to enable these young people to meet their economic needs immediately and to embark on a long-term process of social and professional reintegration. One of the strengths of this programme in engaging young people lies in its speed: a professional contacts them, and they can start working the next day on a four-hour job, with same-day payment.

This unique feature is a major advantage for young people who may be wary or hostile to any form of commitment.

While the TAPAJ programme primarily targets homeless youth and polysubstance users, its flexible and innovative access model could also meet the needs of the most vulnerable young people and low-level actors in trafficking as a tool for reintegration into the legal job market. Local stakeholders could draw inspiration from the TAPAJ (flexible work with daily pay) model to adapt existing schemes aimed at the young people targeted by LIMITS, in particular educational work programmes.

The [service civique](#) programme is also a scheme that helps re-engage young people who are often quite disconnected from other mainstream support systems and allows them to receive a monthly allowance. For a period of between 6 and 12 months, their mission will contribute to their social integration with an association or public service, and help them to plan more confidently for the future towards training or qualifications. The trajectories of young people leaving civic service are overall [positives](#).



The relevance and effectiveness of all these schemes must be considered within a long-term pathway approach, tailored to each young person's progress and involving parents, with bridges between different programmes. The one-off implementation of one of these actions is not a sufficient response to bring about a lasting change in trajectory.

Other Policy schemes

In priority urban areas, mainstream schemes are coordinated with specific "Urban Policy" schemes initiatives such as those supported by the interministerial fund for the prevention of delinquency and radicalisation (FIPDR) or the "Ville-Vie-Vacances" programme, which provides educational support and leisure activities for young people with limited access to holidays during weekends and school holidays.

2.7 PROVIDE AN IMMEDIATE RESPONSE FROM THE FIRST OFFENCE

The almost daily presence at a drug dealing point in some areas, and the image conveyed in the media and on social networks, which sometimes glorifies drug dealers, lead to a trivialisation of the activity and a feeling of impunity or even invulnerability, which is maintained by criminal networks

that recruit the youngest members of society. These perceptions must be challenged in coordination with the justice system. The mayor-issued formal warning (RAO) provides a systematic, swift, and proportionate response.

Formal warning (RAO)

The RAO is a verbal injunction from the mayor based on administrative police powers. It aims to limit the individual behaviour of offenders (excluding crimes or misdemeanours) who are likely to undermine good order in the municipality³, as far upstream as possible. The RAO can complement the actions of the internal security forces and offer a symbolic and rapid response that can be deployed in the context of the indirect involvement of minors in trafficking.

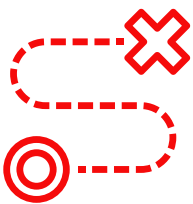
In the case of the LIMITS trial, this arrangement may include a dialogue between the mayor and the public prosecutor to define its application. The RAO, which is distinct from the Family Rights and Responsibilities Council (CDDF), may offer certain advantages in the fight against the involvement of young people in trafficking. Indeed, summoning the young person's parents allows various issues to be addressed, such as their child's presence in public spaces, any antisocial behaviour committed by the minor, their recurrent school absenteeism affecting their education, and disruptive acts that could be harmful to them, among others. In the second part of the meeting, the mayor may consider offering support measures for the young person and their family, such as parenting support, initiatives to prevent school dropout, or extracurricular activities. Alternatively, a 'mutual commitment contract' could be proposed to the young person to prevent their involvement in trafficking and guide the family towards the support schemes set up under the LIMITS project.

The process often includes feedback from the mayor to the public prosecutor on outcomes. In the event of a failure to respond to the summons or an inappropriate attitude when the warning is issued or afterwards (repetition of the offence), a graduated response should be planned to avoid creating a sense of impunity. These graduated measures may include notifying the public prosecutor's office or social services.

*** EXAMPLES FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS**

LIMITS Lille: Breakaway and reintegration pathway

For this 'vulnerable' group, who have varying degrees of proximity to trafficking, the 'intervention stay' is a relevant option.



The intervention and reintegration programme is currently being trialled by the city of Lille with around ten young people. This pathway should be distinguished from a simple one-off stay, and forms part of a much longer, comprehensive approach lasting almost a year, involving the selection of young people (in conjunction with the players involved, in some cases the judicial youth protection services), ensuring their motivation throughout the process, liaising with their parents, and individual and group monitoring. There is also provision for a follow-up after 6 months.

During these intervention programmes, specific efforts must be made to anticipate the young person's return to their home and peer community.

³ According to Articles L. 2212-1 and L. 2212-2 of the French General Code of Local Authorities, the mayor has police powers whose purpose is to 'ensure good order, safety, security, public health and public order within the territory of the municipality'.

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03

ACTION STRATEGIES FOR
FAMILIES

03 ACTION STRATEGIES FOR FAMILIES

Parents are their children's primary educators and therefore have a role to play in preventing and diverting young people from involvement in trafficking. Family situations are just as diverse as the difficulties they face. Talking about trafficking and the possible involvement of a child in it can be difficult or even a taboo subject. Actions can be taken to support parents and families and thus reinforce the protective role they can play in protecting the youngest children. Families are also partners and stakeholders in prevention, and as such can benefit from support.

3.1 PARENTING SUPPORT PROGRAMMES

These are aimed at all parents and are not specific to issues of delinquency or risky behaviour. Their aim is to support parents in their role as their child's primary carer, in particular through listening, support, advice and information, or to encourage mutual help and dialogue between parents.

3.1.1 Example of the Family and Parenting Support Programme (PSFP)

The PSFP is an international primary prevention programme aimed at improving family skills. Aimed at parents, children and families, it can be implemented from early childhood through to adolescence. Initially designed for children aged 6 to 11 years, this programme has been adapted for 3-6 year olds and 12-16 year olds.

More than 150 assessment studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of the PSFP, at various levels: improvement of family resilience, intra-family communication, parental effectiveness and positive parenting. A reduction in the use and initiation into psychoactive substances (alcohol, tobacco, illegal drugs) among young people and parents, increased confidence and feelings of parenting effectiveness, and improved school results have also been observed.

Each edition brings together a group of 10 families for 14 two-hour sessions, one per week. It therefore requires a major commitment on the part of the local authority for its implementation: training of the coordinators (between 4 and 6 trained coordinators for the local authority), the time required for the PSFP coordinator (organisation, family recruitment campaign) and the sessions.

3.1.2 Schemes supported by the Family Allowance Fund (CAF)

The institutions, associations, and organisations which provides listening, support, and assistance to parents, supported by the CAF, offer a wide range of parenting support initiatives (panel discussions, child-parent workshops, family outings, discussion groups, etc.), which aim to strengthen parents' skills through dialogue and exchange.



As a general rule, it may be useful to ask the CAF about the parenting schemes available in the area and to promote them as part of the LIMITS experiments.

3.2 PROVIDING SPECIFIC SUPPORT FOR PARENTS CONFRONTED WITH THE INVOLVEMENT OF THEIR CHILD IN TRAFFICKING: A DIFFICULT CHALLENGE TO MEET

During the trials in Lille, Loos and Sarcelles, this issue emerged as a necessity.

Parental feelings when faced with the discovery of a child's involvement in trafficking are complex to understand and support. Building a relationship of trust with families requires a careful and measured approach, progressing step by step without stigmatising.

Getting parents on board is the major challenge. It is possible to publicise the group or individual support schemes for parents offered under LIMITS via local stakeholders who are aware of a young person's involvement in trafficking within a family, or following an initial police custody that does not lead to judicial proceedings.

The formats may vary depending on local circumstances: parents' coffee group, parents' area, etc. Dedicated time can be set aside in a pre-existing venue where parents can recharge their batteries, share their experiences and feelings about discovering their child's involvement in trafficking: guilt, astonishment, shame, powerlessness, and seek solutions.

As mentioned in the first part, families can be identified through existing or ad hoc bodies within the community to detect and support young people at high risk or already involved, in conjunction with the appropriate partners.

Local socio-educational stakeholders, through an outreach approach and the trust established with one or both parents, can also guide them towards an individual support programme.

Actions taken :

In addition to the collective actions mentioned above, support for parents may involve individual sessions with the family, for parents on an individual basis or as a couple.

These sessions can help parents take a step back from what may have led their children to engage in risky behaviour, develop their power to act, help them regain legitimacy and strengthen their parenting skills. Avoiding breakdowns in communication between parent and child is a key element of the support provided. This can provide them with tools or inform them of partners who can help their children and support them in proposing alternative activities and new centres of interest to get the child out of the grip of trafficking.

The sessions should be conducted by specialists in family and parenting issues who already work within a local organisation (having an existing connection with families) and are familiar with the specific challenges related to delinquency and trafficking.

The question of where to hold the meetings will need to be addressed, to ensure that the process is anonymous for the families, to identify a 'neutral' location for them, to maintain the professional aspect of the process, to guarantee easy access to the location if they have to travel outside the neighbourhood, etc.

It may also be a good idea to offer group discussion forums for parents or families facing similar problems. Not feeling alone in their helplessness or even shame, being able to talk about their difficulties and their attempts - whether successful or not - to overcome them, and hearing the experiences of other parents are key factors that should not be overlooked.

It appears particularly challenging to engage people on this issue.

It should be noted that partners may also be reluctant to take this approach. It is necessary to explain the objectives clearly and to take the time for in-depth discussions between professionals.

An evaluation of the first three trials highlighted the difficulty of identifying parents who were likely and willing to take part in the scheme. Some partners have struggled to take part in this initiative and to adopt an outreach approach to guide individuals towards a suitable support programme.

Ultimately, engaging families and key adult figures applies to both men and women. The parenting support initiatives carried out in Loos and Lille have primarily involved mothers; it would be worthwhile to try to engage both parents. It is particularly important to reassure parents about the confidentiality of the process.

3.3 REMINDING STAKEHOLDERS OF THEIR RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES: MOBILISING THE CDDF

The Family Rights and Responsibilities Council (CDDF) is a scheme established as part of the policy for preventing delinquency and supporting families, implemented by municipalities. It aims to prevent delinquent behaviour by working with the families of children in difficulty, reminding certain parents of their obligations and responsibilities, and helping them to establish an educational framework.

The composition of the CDDF should include members who can provide insight into the young person's situation, such as representatives of the State, local authorities, and professionals working in social action, healthcare, education, integration, and delinquency prevention. It seems advisable to invite the departmental council, which is involved in social action and child protection, and can appoint its representative.

Following discussions that adhere to the confidentiality rules of the various bodies represented, families may be invited to individual sessions to discuss their difficulties and propose appropriate solutions. These sessions may lead to the preparation and signing of a **parental responsibility agreement** committing the parents to taking certain measures to improve their children's situation.

Additionally, **referrals to parenting support services**, educational programmes, or support structures may result from these discussions.

* EXAMPLES FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS

LIMITS Lille: Parents' Workshop – Sharing experiences to gain confidence in parenting skills

Addressing the issue of trafficking remains highly complex. The topic cannot be addressed directly or used as a hook to get parents interested in it.

Workshops organised at the initiative of the local authority in a particular neighbourhood, which can be jointly led by a parenting support service and a neighbourhood association that already has links with local residents. Various themes are explored: perceptions and realities of the neighbourhood, knowledge of illicit substances, dialogue between young people and their parents, supporting children in building self-confidence, emotion management, developing autonomy, the adolescent's role within a group, the influence of peers, their presence in the neighbourhood, and their role as a student within the school environment.

Through the themes of the discussions and the regularity of the meetings, the objectives of the LIMITS project are approached, such as informing parents about the risk factors for entry into delinquency and the risks associated with their children's environment, taking particular account of the organisation of trafficking, etc. These exchanges are aimed at parents in general, in the context of questions about the development of young people's autonomy. Communication with families should draw on all the networks established within the neighbourhood (posters, information boards, social networks, mailings, informal exchanges with local stakeholders, individual requests, etc.)

Communication about the project should be broad-based and not specifically target the issue of trafficking, but rather the issue of safety in the neighbourhood, the prevention of 'harmful associations', etc.



LIMITS Lille: creation of a podcast to gather and share the voices of mothers

As part of discussion groups set up for parents of children aged 8 to 12, particularly focused on concerns about neighbourhood safety (violence, fights, trafficking, drug use, etc.), several mothers expressed their desire to extend their efforts by sharing their experiences, fears, and ideas through podcasts.

A tool was created to communicate with other parents facing the same challenges, allowing them to explain their situation to those who do not experience this daily reality.

A number of other themes were chosen by the parents: police/citizen relations, insecurity, education, housing and solidarity between residents.

The project was carried out in partnership with the Collectif la Baraque, a group of journalists and artists, and the neighbourhood association Perspectives.



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04

BROADENING ENGAGEMENT
AND TAKING ACTION ON THE
GROUND

04 BROADENING ENGAGEMENT AND TAKING ACTION ON THE GROUND

The examples of action given above were mainly aimed at young people and their families, using educational, social or legal levers. LIMITS is also an opportunity to work on living environments and public spaces to promote a safe and positive use of public areas and to show young people themselves alternative ways to make use of their free time and plan for the future. These initiatives also give hope to the residents themselves.

4.1 FACILITATING RESIDENT MOBILISATION AGAINST TRAFFICKING AND SECURING THEIR COMMITMENT

The existence of post-traumatic stress or long-term emotional reactions can explain why some residents remain silent and are reluctant to take part in action on trafficking issues (silence is sometimes misinterpreted as a form of omerta). The role of listening and of a framework that allows residents to speak without judgement and without risk may be worth developing.

However, silence may also stem from a genuine fear among residents due to the violence perpetrated by criminal networks in certain neighbourhoods. Residents and parents sometimes put themselves in danger by directly confronting dealers in a building lobby or near a school.

To make it easier and safer for residents not to let drug dealers take over their neighbourhoods, there are legal tools available, but they are often not well known. These mechanisms make it possible to raise the alarm and appeal to public authorities, without exposing oneself directly to the violence, threats and retaliation of traffickers.

The reporting platform

The drug reporting portal enables all citizens, anonymously if they so wish, to report or provide information about drug trafficking of which they are aware : [Trafic de stupéfiants | Ma Sécurité \(interieur.gouv.fr\)](https://interieur.gouv.fr/trafic-de-stupefiants).

All the information collected is used, is valuable, and can initiate, supplement, and corroborate investigations that help dismantle major organised crime networks.

In this way, citizens contribute directly to protecting the area where they live and their loved ones from the stranglehold and violence imposed by drug traffickers.

Anonymous testimony or so-called ‘under X’ testimony and confidential witness (witnesses identified by numbers)

The Ministry of Justice has put in place legal tools to protect the identity of witnesses in the various cases provided for by criminal procedure.

The address of the ‘witness or collaborator of justice’ may remain confidential and not appear in the proceedings.

Anonymous witness

In proceedings relating to a felony or misdemeanour punishable by at least three years’ imprisonment, where the testimony of a witness is likely to seriously endanger the life or physical integrity of that person, members of their family or persons close to them, the judge may authorise the statements of that person to be taken without their identity appearing in the record of the proceedings.

Revealing the identity or address of a person who has benefited from these provisions is an offence.

Confidential witness

In the case of proceedings relating to a crime or an offence punishable by at least three years' imprisonment, where the revelation of the identity of a witness is likely to seriously endanger their life or physical integrity or those of their relatives, the judge may order that this identity not be mentioned during public hearings and not appear in orders, judgments or rulings of the investigating or trial court which are likely to be made public.

Unlike anonymous testimony, the identity of the confidential witness appears in the proceedings and is known to the parties but is not made public. The witness is then designated by a number.

Revealing the identity or address of a person who has benefited from these provisions is an offence punishable by five years' imprisonment and a €75,000 fine.

4.2 ENCOURAGING CITIZEN PARTICIPATION TO EASE TENSIONS IN THE AREA AND CHANGE ITS IMAGE

In addition to and alongside law enforcement efforts to dismantle networks through the actions of internal security forces and the justice system, LIMITS should help develop solutions tailored to the area to reclaim public space, prevent trafficking from taking hold, or eliminate it if already present.

While it may be unrealistic to think that trafficking in a neighbourhood can be eradicated through urban planning or architectural solutions, or by installing cultural, sporting, or landscaping facilities, all these developments help to occupy the space in a positive way, to recreate peaceful living spaces, and to prevent residents from becoming discouraged by the pervasive presence of traffickers.

Anything that reduces the influence of drug dealing, its visibility, its violence and its impact on the daily lives of residents reduces the visibility of drug dealers and their positive image, particularly among young people. Alternative uses of public space, such as sports, cultural activities, and neighbourhood gatherings, make traffickers less visible, less accessible, and less appealing.

4.2.1 Situational and urban prevention

Situational prevention is not aimed at individuals but at situations that are conducive to crime. It consists of reducing the opportunities for the offence to be committed. By intervening in the environment as early as possible, the aim is to deter potential offenders from committing acts of wrongdoing or antisocial behaviour and to protect potential victims. Responding to the challenges of insecurity in everyday places and ensuring public order and peace involves leveraging public expertise, notably by conducting security assessments, carrying out preliminary studies for any collective development, and using video surveillance.

The police and national gendarmerie train personnel, known as 'security advisors,' to provide safety advice and conduct security assessments, audits, or studies for professionals in the education, commercial, industrial, and institutional sectors. They also contribute their expertise in technical crime prevention in the fields of urban planning and construction (such as urban renewal projects, etc.).

In addition to this situational prevention, the concept of **urban prevention** has emerged, highlighting ways to promote the design of spaces that foster social connections and positive use of public areas. The goal is to increase usage, enhance the potential for events and public engagement in these spaces, as a complement to more 'defensive' measures.

A collaborative approach is essential to align the different stakeholder strategies and create the conditions for more sustainable security in urban projects. Avenues can be explored with local partners and residents to develop new projects that meet the desires and needs identified by residents.

As part of the LIMITS initiative, it may be useful to establish contacts with urban social development (DSU) stakeholders. Urban planning expertise can also be sought, sometimes in collaboration with housing providers and local authorities, or within the framework of the French National Agency for Urban Renewal projects.

4.2.2 Examples of positive appropriation of public space

Reclaiming public space often means allowing children to engage with their surroundings. Working with elementary schools can be an interesting way of getting older children involved, and changing the way a place is perceived.

Similarly, the **quartiers d'été** summer programme is being rolled out as part of calls for projects that enable associations and local authorities working with the residents of priority neighbourhoods to offer activities and stays during the summer period.

Similar to the approaches used in local urban management (GUP) in priority neighbourhoods, the practice of **'urban walks'**, organised with residents, allows for a shared assessment of the quality of the living environment, including public safety. It also helps to identify collaborative solutions that align with residents' expectations and habits, ensuring an effective and lasting reclaiming of public space.

Sporting activities, in addition to their proven benefits for health, for combating idleness, for boosting self-esteem and self-confidence, for encouraging membership of a supportive group and identification with positive role models, are also a way of occupying space. The International Olympic Committee (IOC) has emphasised the decisive role of sport in creating safer communities and in combating violence and crime among young people. Without making sport a panacea for combating delinquency and eradicating trafficking, sport in all its forms, particularly if it enables people to take ownership of places, can be an effective means of engagement, facilitating the installation and occupation of facilities such as city stadiums, street workout areas and skate parks. Sporting facilities can be permanent or temporary. Street furniture can also be appropriated, and one-off sports events organised, helping to change the image of a neighbourhood.

The appropriation of space through sport must not exclude girls or contribute to the perpetuation of gender inequalities. This challenge of creating inclusive communal spaces helps to deconstruct the myths associated with the kingpin and the promotion of a masculinity often associated with violence.

The creation or preservation of local businesses in the most vulnerable areas are also valuable tools to leverage.

The setup of community food trucks, cafés, or temporary canteens are just some of the many ideas that can be used to create new ways for residents to reclaim shared spaces. One example is the initiative by the SOS group : <https://www.groupe-sos.org/actualites/quartiers-cafes-une-initiative-pour-les-commerces-de-proximite-dans-les-quartiers-prioritaires/>

The recent study report by the General Inspectorate of Cultural Affairs on 'The Role of the Ministry of Culture in Priority Urban Neighbourhoods (QPV)⁴' (June 2024) could serve as a starting point for reflecting on the role of art in reclaiming public space. La Grande Lessive is an example of a transgenerational participatory art event that takes place along a street, across a neighbourhood, or over a wider area : <https://www.lagrandelessive.net>

Finally, in the same way as sporting and artistic activities, **the challenges of ecological transition and adaptation to climate change** in neighbourhoods can lead to local reflection on the emergence of attractive economic activities and job opportunities. Training or support for retraining in these new nature-based professions can encourage the local employment of residents and the professional

⁴ <https://www.culture.gouv.fr/espace-documentation/Rapports/l-action-du-ministere-de-la-culture-dans-les-quartiers-de-la-politique-de-la-ville-qpv>

integration of young people. It also represents an interesting way of encouraging intergenerational social connections and social diversity. For example: nature-based infrastructures and activities (ecological corridors, greenways, short circuits, collective workcamps, etc.) or by facilitating access for local residents to natural, agricultural or forestry areas close to where they live. Banlieue Climat could be an interesting partner to approach in the context of the LIMITS project.

* EXAMPLES FROM THE EXPERIMENTAL PROJECTS

LIMITS Loos: the Flora Tristan Tower

In 2020, Loos town council decided to launch a trafficking prevention programme to tackle the situation in one neighbourhood, specifically a tower block particularly prone to insecurity and drug dealing, the Tour Flora Tristan, known in the media as the 'Tower of Death'. The headline in La Voix du Nord referred to "The Tower where drug dealers reign" (2019).

After a major mobilisation of the security forces to counter drug trafficking through a policy of action against drug dealing points, including the dismantling of the network, there was a need to prevent drug trafficking from re-establishing itself. The involvement of all the stakeholders in the area was required, and helped to reclaim the tower block for its residents, calm relations in the neighbourhood and encourage positive use of the public space.

This long-term initiative has brought together the internal security forces, the prefecture, the local authority, social housing providers and residents.

The aim is to respond as soon as the first alarm is raised, to prevent the slightest attempt to re-establish the network (occasional presence of a lookout, attempt to take over the space by installing a chair in the hall to monitor entrances/exits, etc.).

In agreement with the housing provider, the 'Paroles d'habitants' association has been set up in a space that is accessible to all residents, who can come and have a coffee and a chat, as well as organising events. They also have access to legal advice, regular support from the housing provider, and the presence of social workers.

In Loos, the work carried out in the Flora Tristan neighbourhood has resulted in a number of tangible achievements :

- ▶ *Improvement in the occupancy rate of the tower block, following renovation by the social housing provider.*
- ▶ *The effective and permanent presence of social workers and representatives of the housing provider, without fear for their safety, and the revival of community life at the foot of the tower.*
- ▶ *Securing the tower through the mobilisation of residents committed to preserving their renovated shared space.*



CONCLUSION

These guidelines have broadly attempted to demonstrate that the involvement of minors (and young adults) in drug trafficking is driven by factors primarily related to the individual, their family, and the environment in which they live.

These factors form a kind of 'risk equation'. Without being stigmatised in any way, and by way of illustration, the risk of becoming involved in drug trafficking is greater for boys who have dropped out of school, live in a family experiencing multiple difficulties and in an environment where traffickers operate in broad daylight and seem to have won the 'image battle', offering the youngest a source of income and 'social' recognition.

LIMITS seeks to highlight the reality of these key factors in a given local context and to act, with the resources available and depending on the choices made by the steering committee, on all or some of the elements in this equation. For illustrative purposes only, the table below provides a summary of the approach, outlining some of the previously described objectives aimed at addressing the factors influencing involvement in trafficking, whether related to the minor, their family, or their environment.

Limits

Table 1: Factors influencing participation in trafficking and possible responses

	Factors influencing participation in trafficking	Responses: LIMITS
Minor	Lack of self-confidence, low self-esteem, communication problems, difficulties managing emotions	Developing life skills (within and outside school) Combating school drop-out and promoting educational and professional integration (educational workcamps, alternative work system paid by the day, etc.)
	Lack of prospects: dropping out of school, difficulties finding work	Opening up possibilities and promoting different forms of success; identifying positive, realistic pathways as an alternative to trafficking
	Pursuit of money: family expenses, purchase of consumer goods, financing a project, paying off a debt	Promoting schemes to help young people turn their backs on delinquency and re-engage with society (internships/trips, etc.) Removing taboos around the reality of trafficking and breaking down myths - Creating spaces and times for dialogue or creativity (theatre, videos) to change perceptions
	Attractiveness of criminal networks - positive portrayal of trafficking and fascination with certain trafficking figures	Showing the reality of the justice system and combating the feeling of impunity
	Feeling of impunity	Responding at the first sign of trouble: formal warnings
Family	Taboo	Developing opportunities for dialogue with families
	Difficulties relating to parenting	Supporting parents through collective or individual initiatives Reminding parents of their rights and responsibilities
Environment	Visibility of trafficking and territorial reach	Supporting the action of the internal security forces (FSI) and the justice system Dismantling dealing points
	Run-down or changing environment (urban renewal)	Developing situational and urban prevention measures Encouraging 'citizen' occupation of spaces Favoriser l'occupation « citoyenne » de l'espace
	Securing citizen involvement	Taking action to protect the environment and living conditions (local authorities, housing providers, residents) Developing knowledge of the reporting platform, and the possibilities of providing testimony anonymously or under a number

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: UNDERSTANDING MINORS' ROLE IN TRAFFICKING: CONFRONTING BROADER TRENDS WITH LOCAL DATA.

Who are the minors involved in trafficking ?

The involvement of minors in trafficking is not a recent phenomenon. The under-13s often remain in the entourage of the older children: they gravitate towards the dealing points and their involvement is often marginal, even if they are in fact immersed in it. They run errands within the well-known framework of the 'can and sandwich economy'⁵. Some young people shout when the police arrive out of 'habit', provocation and rejection of the police and are not remunerated; they are often not really aware that they are facilitating trafficking.

These nuances do not, however, mean that we should deny the problem of immersion in this illegal and violent world, and the admiration, even fascination, that these very young people may have for these "grown-ups", with the dealing activity becoming a "model".

The average age of the 'little hands' employed by the criminal networks in subordinate roles tends to be, among young boys, around 15-16. Many young adults are also involved. Recruitment may also target the 'vulnerable' in the broadest sense, young people in an irregular situation, unaccompanied minors, or even people with disabilities (there have recently been reports of recruitment of disabled people under guardianship, in ESAT-type establishments).

The involvement of young girls, although extremely marginal at present, cannot be totally ruled out and vigilance is required in this regard. The Marseille Public Prosecutor has drawn attention to a number of recent cases.

It is also important to highlight the increasing mobility of the young people involved, who are sometimes recruited for very short-term tasks or even 'contracts' lasting a few days or weeks ('summer jobs')—either through a loose acquaintance or, increasingly, via the internet and social media. It is not uncommon these days to find young people from another region, for example, at a dealing point.

The use of the term 'switchover' (basculement), often used to describe the moment when minors are about to engage in trafficking or have joined the network, does not seem entirely appropriate. It now seems overly simplistic and binary to accurately reflect the phenomenon and be truly useful for stakeholders. In particular, it fails to account for possible back-and-forth involvement, temporary 'grey areas' of affiliation, or the gradual continuum that often begins in childhood. It may also, mistakenly, lead to a concentration of resources on this so-called turning point. However, this critique should not overshadow the mechanisms of entrapment through debt, as well as mental and physical control, which affect young people involved in trafficking networks—often alongside the sense of recognition they gain from their peer group already engaged in the trade.

⁵ 2011. "La canette et le sandwich". La participation des jeunes dans le trafic de stupéfiants", Nacer Lalam in DUPORT, C. (dir), L'intervention sociale à l'épreuve des trafics de drogues, pp.45 à 52

Motivations and illusions

Money is a major driving force, and its role should not be overlooked. But the analysis is often complex. The earnings are very poorly distributed between the players in the network and the little hands are in fact exploited. The money exists and is accessible to young people who are sometimes too young to earn it legally. It can be accessed quickly, with daily cash payments ranging from €100, €150, €200, sometimes more due to 'risk premiums' for certain territories known to be dangerous; however, the sums actually earned remain difficult to estimate, as the tendency of small-time operators is sometimes to overestimate their real earnings.

Research into drug money ('Argent de la drogue', 2016) carried out by the INHESJ identifies that the actual remuneration received by the small hands involved in trafficking (lookouts, sellers) is lower than the minimum monthly wage (SMIC), as they only work 10 to 12 days a month on average. The argument of calculating earnings based on an hourly rate and highlighting the lack of social security and retirement contributions is valid and can be mentioned, but it often has little impact on these young people, showing that factors beyond economic rationality are at play.

The desire, whether genuine or not, of some to 'save up' or put money aside is often an illusion. Contrary to the myths propagated in the networks and among certain young people, money is never 'easy'. Taking part in trafficking is often synonymous with getting into debt: losses resulting from theft by a rival network, seizure of the product or money by the police or the creation of a fictitious debt by the network's leaders. In addition, the non-financial costs are considerable: stress, boredom, extreme violence.

In the final analysis, while money is not the only driving force behind drug trafficking, it remains a determining factor that prevention must address, despite the unfavourable cost/benefit ratio. It also makes it necessary to address the issue of young people's integration from the point of view of employment and income, and to respond to a number of preconceived ideas about young people.

Among the many factors that make it possible to understand young people's involvement in drug trafficking, scientific research has also identified the search for 'adrenaline rushes and alternative passions' that are characteristic of the many risky behaviours typical of adolescence. The mantra 'die like a lion instead of living like a dog', conveyed by many of the clips and videos popular with young people, can be used to justify involvement in trafficking in that it offers a life that is seen as exciting and free.

Finally, it is also important to understand that young people are often attracted to a group in which they can find a place and a form of recognition. The often chaotic personal experiences of these young people lead them to believe, rightly or wrongly, that society, school and family have failed to offer them any prospects. The network they see and work with, often since childhood, is (as mentioned above) often a source of admiration and sustains certain hopes.

Consequences of which young people are unaware

For some young people, dealing is sometimes genuinely seen as a temporary activity. Few young people envisage a 'career' in crime with the ambition of rising through the ranks of seniority. In reality, in the vast majority of cases, it is a dead-end street where it is often difficult to turn back.

The criminal network is a business like no other. Its management is based on violence and threats. Furthermore, the trafficker is a 'dishonest boss' and the money promised is sometimes an illusion. There are many pretexts for not paying or for creating a debt that makes it impossible to 'quit': the little hand is made responsible for the loss of the product due to police intervention, theft by a competitor, etc.

Dealing is never without consequences: the after-effects are mental (post-traumatic stress for some), criminal, or marked by additional difficulties in finding employment (a criminal record makes it impossible to access a wide range of jobs: private security, jobs requiring specific access authorisations, etc.). The consequences are also physical (beatings, and other forms of violence leave considerable and irreversible scars). In her hearing before the Senate Committee on Drug Trafficking, Isabelle Couderc, Vice-President of the Marseilles Judicial Court in charge of the JIRS (specialised inter-regional court), referred to videos seized from mobile phones in investigations showing young boys confined, 'beaten, tortured and humiliated' in cellars. This violence can lead to death.

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APPENDIX 2: THE VOCABULARY OF TRAFFICKING

Arah

“Warning” in Arabic – a lookout’s cry to warn of the arrival of internal security forces.

Aspirant

An individual who helps out as a lookout or courier, often without being explicitly asked, in the hope of joining the network, earning some money, or simply to be of service or pass the time.

Banquier (Banker)

A person responsible for frequently collecting money from sales at the dealing point to prevent sellers from holding too much cash.

Charbonneur or Jobbeur (Dealer)

A vendor stationed at the drug-selling point.

Coursier (Courier)

A person who buys food and drinks for network members. Sometimes, they also relay messages between members of the network.

« Défaucher » (Se) (To get out of financial struggle)

To put an end to the perpetual lack of money in daily life. No longer be constantly “broke”, with no money.

Equipe feu (Fire Team)

A term originating in Marseille but now spreading across France, referring to teams assigned to reclaim a dealing spot held by a rival network.

Etre à la sacoche (Being on commission-based pay)

A vendor’s payment method based on daily earnings, depending on sales made during the shift. Pay varies by region. In Marseille, according to information from the public prosecutor’s office during a Senate commission hearing, it can reach €150–200 per day.

Four (Drug Den)

A dealing point or a location where drugs are sold.

Guetteur ou chouf (Lookout)

A person, often very young, tasked with monitoring the drug-selling location from a distance. They are responsible for alerting others when the police approach.

Jambisation (Leg-shooting punishment)

A violent attack targeting a person’s lower limbs as a form of punishment or warning.

« Monsieur propre » (“Mr. Clean”)

A person in charge of eliminating evidence related to violent acts within drug trafficking operations - burning cars, destroying clothes, disposing of weapons, etc.

Nourrice (Stash Keeper)

A person responsible for storing drugs or money for the network, usually in their home. Traffickers often target vulnerable individuals, such as single mothers in financial difficulty or elderly people, to take on this role.

RH ou surveillant (Recruiter or Overseer)

A person responsible for recruiting, paying, and overseeing low-level operatives ('small hands').

Transporteur ou ravitailleur (Supplier or Resupplier)

An individual who regularly supplies the dealing point with drugs from a storage location (nourrice). This frequent resupply minimizes the amount of stock held at the dealing site at any given time. Stashes are sometimes kept at a significant distance from the distribution point.

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