



Cope & Hope

Collection of Best practices for the Social Integration of Third Country National Victims of Human Trafficking

COPE and HOPE - AMIF-2018-AG-INTE COPE and HOPE:
Practical approaches fostering social integration of TCN women victims of trafficking

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List of Acronyms and abbreviations

(EU)	European Union
(TCN)	Third Country Nationals
(VoHT)	Victims of Human Trafficking
(IOM)	International Organization for Migrations
(ECRE)	European Council on Refugees and Exiles
(PTSD)	Post-traumatic Stress Disorder
(CT/ CPTSD)	Complex Trauma / Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder
(GBV)	Gender Based Violence
(NGO)	Non-Governmental Organization
(Palermo protocol)	Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children
(Istanbul Convention)	Council of Europe Convention on preventing and combating violence against women and domestic violence

Note 1: This report focuses mainly on Victims of Human Trafficking for sexual exploitation. The form of exploitation wasn't always clear in most documents analysed, reason why the acronym VoHT will be used in a broad sense;

Note 2: The documents analysed differed in the terminology used for the target population. Some documents use victim, woman or survivor. In this report these concepts were used indistinctively.

1. General Introduction

Human Trafficking constitutes a Transnational crime with severe implications for the direct and indirect victims. It is a serious violation of their basic Human Rights such as the rights to liberty, security, freedom of movement, the right not to be subjected to torture and/or cruel, inhuman, degrading treatment or punishment, amongst others.

This Transnational crime is known to affect women and children in particular all around the Globe, for which it manifests a specific gender dimension, especially in the case of Trafficking with means of sexual exploitation, which constitutes the most commonly identified form of human trafficking. According to the UN (UNODC, 2018), “the vast majority of detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and 35 percent of those trafficked for forced labour are female”.

At an International level, and to tackle Human Trafficking and best assist the victims, the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime adopted the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children (also known as Palermo Protocol), which was opened for signature, ratification and accession by General Assembly resolution 55/25 of 15 November 2000, and was later ratified by 176 countries¹.

This Protocol defines Trafficking in persons as “the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;”(Art.3).

Amongst other goals, this Protocol establishes as a purpose to “protect and assist the victims of such trafficking, with full respect for their human rights” (Art.2).

Human Trafficking in Spain and Italy

In both Spain and Italy, the countries to which the project Cope & Hope will apply, concrete legislation has been developed after the ratification of the Palermo Protocols, in order to address Trafficking and support its victims. Both are considered to be countries of destination, source, and transit for men, women, and children subjected to forced labour and sex trafficking (United States Department of State, 2018). Victims arriving to both these countries come mainly from Eastern Europe (particularly Romania and Bulgaria), Nigeria and other sub Saharan countries, China and, mainly in the case of Spain, South American countries, particularly Venezuela, Paraguay, Brazil, Colombia, and Ecuador.

In 2009 **Spain** developed the Comprehensive plan to combat trafficking in Human Beings (2009-2012)² and, in 2011, its first Framework Protocol for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking³, aimed to “establish operational guidelines for the detection, identification, support and protection of victims of human trafficking, to foster coordination among the institutions involved in these processes and to define the mechanisms for the relationship among authorities with responsibilities in the field, along with the processes for communication and cooperation with organisations and bodies with proven experience in attending to victims of trafficking, in particular those which provide comprehensive support and are involved in public administration programs for victim support and protection”. This Protocol follows the introduction of specific articles on the rights which assist VoHT in Spain (article 59 and 59 *bis*) in the Organic Law 4/2000, of January 11, on the rights and freedoms of foreigners in Spain

¹ According to the [United Nations Treaty Collection](#) web page, at the date of 30th of April, 2020;

² [Plan integral de lucha contra la trata de seres humanos con fines de explotación sexual](#)

³ [Protocolo marco de protección de las víctimas de trata de seres humanos](#)

and their social integration⁴. In 2015, the Comprehensive plan to combat trafficking in women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation (2015-2018)⁵ was developed, following the previous and introducing a more gendered approach.

Although Human Trafficking in Spain is considered a form of violence, not every autonomous region considers the rights of VoHT to the equivalent of the rights of other women in a situation of GBV: victims enter different circuits of assistance in different parts of the country due to the geopolitical configuration of the Spanish territory in politically autonomous regions and an associated lack of unification in this field. In Catalonia, the Catalan Government understands Human Trafficking applied to women as a specific form of gender-based violence at the community level and according to the Law (Llei 5/2008), victims have access to the same services as any other women in the GBV circuit, having also the same rights, materialized in the following:

- Right to economic benefits;
- Right to specialized health care and assistance;
- Right to care and legal assistance;
- Right to effective protection;
- Rights in the area of access to housing;
- Right to employment and job training;
- Right to access the Catalan Comprehensive Care and Recovery Network for women in situations of gender-based violence, a network that is available for all forms and areas of gender-based violence, including victims of trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation.

The Protocol for the protection of victims of trafficking in human beings in Catalonia (GENCAT, 2013) establishes the list of NGO's, public services and legal circuits to which victims have access to, regardless of their legal status, complying with the Spanish Protocol for the Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking and with the Palermo Protocol and incorporating this circuit in the circuit for victims of other gender based forms of violence.

In Italy, Article. 18 of D.Lgs. 286/98⁶, established the "social assistance and integration programs"⁷ which have been activated throughout the national territory developing a methodology for the effective protection and assistance of victims of Trafficking, thus creating the national anti-trafficking system, coordinated at the level central by the Department for Equal Opportunities at the Prime Minister's Office⁸.

These programs were supported later, in 2003, by the Trafficking Law no. 228/03⁹, which, on one hand, changes some of the Articles of the Italian Penal code, increasing the sanctions for trafficking crimes and on the other hand, in its article 13, it also establishes the rights of the victims in terms of social assistance and basic needs coverage. Italy approved on the 16th of May 2018 the Comprehensive program of emergence, assistance and social integration of victims of Trafficking¹⁰, with the aim of providing reception and protection to people in the preliminary phase of ascertaining the status of victim of trafficking and, subsequently, of providing them with the tools necessary to achieve full autonomy. Therefore, this program guarantees the victim, on a temporary basis (three months, possibly extendable by another three months), adequate conditions of lodging and health care and, subsequently, the continuation of assistance until a situation of complete housing, work and social integration is reached.

⁴ Ley Orgánica 4/2000, de 11 de enero, sobre derechos y libertades de los extranjeros en España y su integración social

⁵ Plan integral de lucha contra la trata de mujeres y niñas con fines de explotación sexual

⁶ Decreto Legislativo 25 luglio 1998, n. 286 "Testo unico delle disposizioni concernenti la disciplina dell'immigrazione e norme sulla condizione dello straniero";

⁷ Programmi di assistenza e integrazione sociale, In Italian, Avai

⁸ Dipartimento per le Pari Opportunità, Presidenza del Consiglio dei Ministri, in Italian

⁹ Legge 11 agosto 2003, n. 228, "Misure contro la tratta di persone"

¹⁰ Free translation from Programma unico di emersione, assistenza e integrazione sociale.

Integration of VoHT in Spain and Italy

Although many victims in both countries enter repatriation programs and are reintegrated in their country of departure, many decide to stay in the country of destination for several reasons, including involvement in the legal proceedings against traffickers, fear of returning to country of origin, and having no means of making a living in the country of origin (IOM, 2007). Furthermore, many victims obtain their legal status by collaborating with the authorities, denouncing their traffickers or asking for asylum in the country of destination. Although much of the information about identified victims isn't entirely public, the Spanish National Police reports having rescued 450 VoHT in 2019 alone, dismantling 54 organizations dedicated to trafficking in human beings for sexual exploitation, labour or forced begging. In Italy, according to the GRETA Report of 2018, there are around 1000 VoHT identified each year.

The social integration of third country national (TNC) victims of Human trafficking (VoHT) and asylum seekers is one of the most complex and demanding aspects of the victim protection process and of the guarantee of her rights. This is a process facilitated primarily by municipalities and NGO's in both countries, and regional or country level programs, as well as European ones. Robinson, cited by IOM (2013), described integration as 'a chaotic concept: a word used by many but understood differently by most'. There are, in fact, several definitions of what social integration means, a concept not only applicable to migrants but also to any more or less vulnerable group or community, depending on numerous factors (ECRE, 2002, pp.22). Traditionally, integration can be a contested concept, at times used interchangeably with notions such as assimilation or multiculturalism. In fact, when addressing integration there is, "usually, an expectation of assimilation into the dominant culture" (ECRE, 2002). Currently, and for the purpose of this report, we will understand social integration as a "two-way process" (Andreatta, C., 2015) of "mutual accommodation"(European Council, 2004, pp.17), adjustment and participation to which both host country nationals as well as migrants try to adapt and coexist in the most possible balanced way. Nevertheless, when addressing the integration of VoHT the elements for integration should be amplified and seen from a more complex perspective, as suggested by the IOM (2013) and the European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE, 2002) which considers the integration of this special population to be:

- a) **Dynamic and two-way**, placing integration in the meeting point between both communities;
- b) **Long-term**, referring to a continuous personal and social process;
- c) **Multi-dimensional**, as it "relates both to the conditions for and actual participation in all aspects of the economic, social, cultural, civil and political life of the country of durable asylum as well as to refugees' own perceptions of acceptance by and membership in the host society"(ECRE, 2002).

Surtees (2008) emphasises inclusion, whether integration or reintegration is taking place. She notes five factors for inclusion: settlement in a safe and secure environment; access to a reasonable standard of living; mental and physical well-being; opportunities for personal, social and economic development, and access to social and emotional support. Also the IOM (2013, pp. 13) considers that "little attention is paid to the medium to long term prospects of victims who remain in the destination country" and GRETA (2019) considers it to be fundamental for the successful integration of victims in society.

Social integration is, by definition, a long-term endeavour as it involves an ongoing process which covers practically every aspect of the victim's life: economic, family, social, labour, competencies, practical knowledge, health, etc. To that end, short-term interventions have been found to be insufficient to guarantee the social integration of VoHT, and as such should not have a mandatory and generalist endpoint. In this process, access or return to the labour market for victims of working age and the reconstruction of their social relations are of particular importance in order to promote their social inclusion.

These different dimensions do not necessarily have a sequential logic and must be seen through a global lenses as they coexist and articulate in different ways and at a different levels. It is, moreover, desirable that the articulation be actively promoted.

Ultimately, integration constitutes a complex, polyhedral and continuous process for which no immovable formulas apply.

1.2 Methodological Introduction

The present collection and analysis of best practices in integration of Third Country National women victims of human trafficking and asylum seekers was based on research that involved the treatment of secondary sources such as previously collected best-practices recommendations, reports, intervention models and protocols, all at the European level. This research was structured in four phases.

- **At a preliminary moment**, a database was constructed following the proposed methodology in order to allow the systematization of the information. This initial systematization was crucial to select best practices and the associated countries that would be the subject of the second phase of investigation. This database was constructed from the 1st to the 5th of April 2020.
- **The second phase** consisted in research, collection and registration of best practices, superficially identified and which, at a first glance, seemed to comply with the main objectives of the present research. In this phase, 39 documents were identified and registered in the database. This research was conducted using key international Institutions like the UN, UNICEF, ILO, GRETA, etc. The research was also conducted in 6 different languages: Portuguese, Spanish, Catalan, French, English and Italian. The initial methodology didn't contemplate the possibility of including academic articles on the matter due to the fact that these are mainly theoretical studies which don't often include best practices validates on the field. A few exceptions were made, and one Academic article was included in the documents to analyse as it was considered to fulfil the methodological requirements. This phase lasted from the 5th to the 15th of April.
- **The third phase** of this research consisted of the analysis of 20 of the best practices collected. These were chosen according to the analysis of the database results, having taken into account how much these documents comply with the quality dimensions and criterion established by the methodology plan. This phase took place from the 16th to the 30th of April.
- **The fourth and final phase** of the current research was the systematization of the previous research in the present report, organized according to the main subjects that were common to all or most of the documents analysed and compiled in a single document of recommendations. This phase took place between the 1st and the 10th of May 2020.

1.2.1 Development of this compilation

Although it was possible to identify a large number of manuals, protocols and recommendations addressing Human Trafficking, some were excluded on a primary filter for the following reasons:

1. **Dealt with issues not directly relevant to the objectives of the current project:**
 - Addressed the prevention and/or combat of Human Trafficking as a crime
 - Addressed war zone situations and humanitarian disasters

- Focused on rapid or emergency response (OIM and other services placed at the border)¹¹
- Focused on shelter housing and first aid support
- Focused on identification of victims
- Focused on victim protection

2. Are outside the mandatory standards for this project:

- Outside of the European Union
- Referred to underage victims
- Referred to reintegration of victims in their home countries after voluntary return or deportation from Europe

3. Ongoing projects with no final results yet

- Many of the Documents referred to ongoing projects which don't have yet any published results, such as the European projects HEAL, TRIPS, Project Assist, Project Tolerant, and Trafficked Women INtegration (WIN), amongst others;

The Protocol for the protection of victims of trafficking in human beings in Catalonia (GENCAT, 2013) does not specifically include guidelines for social integration but it establishes the theoretical frame for the assistance of VoHT in Catalonia, since it is the legal frame from which all action in this matter depends on. For this reason it was also analysed.

Also, one of the documents analysed (Lilja, I., 2019) refers only to best practices in counselling and psychological treatment of victims of trafficking and women asylum seekers victims of violence. Although it refers to a specific issue and not a general best-practice, this document was considered valid for analysis as the experience of Trafficking leaves long-lasting psychological scars which need to be addressed in parallel with other focus interventions, in order to guarantee the recovery and (re)empowerment of VoHT in the social inclusion process.

Another document analysed, the IOM handbook on direct assistance for victims of trafficking, is not specifically directed to the integration of VoHT in the destination country but it is an international mandatory comprehensive manual for setting basic guidelines for assisting VoHT, especially in the fields of safety, confidentiality and health dimensions of trafficking.

In the selection of best practices to analyse, the criterion for validation and relevance of these documents and that served as lenses through which to perform this collection, revealed that considerable relevance is given to the subjects of Human Rights Perspective, GBV, empowerment perspective, Migrations and Transcultural perspective. Nevertheless, as it will be clear throughout the rest of the report, some other subjects were barely mentioned or developed, such as Post-colonialist perspective and community involvement, although regarding this last one the creation of networks in enforced, with the known limitations regarding safety and confidentiality.

It is also relevant to notice that around half of the documents analysed came from the development of programs and projects for integration, therefore validated by experience. Nevertheless, as it will become clear, given the complexity of the issue at hand, most recommendations translate into framework approaches and don't necessarily specify concrete actions, itineraries or strategies. This, as it will show, is also due to the victim-centred approach, that is common to most documents analysed.

The basic information about the documents analysed is as follows:

¹¹ Most Documents preliminary identified were dismissed as they focused on the first phase of intervention with VoHT, mainly the arrival, detection and legal process practices.

Potential documents for analysis	39
Documents Selected	20 documents
Date ranges:	2002-2019
Countries:	Spain, Italy, France, Portugal, Belgium, Hungary, The Netherlands, Croatia, Romania, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Switzerland, Finland, Germany, Sweden
Range of Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 EU projects • 5 General International documents • 2 NGO only documents • 1 Academic article • 1 Municipal/Regional Document
Type of Document	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 Best practices • 9 Recommendations • 2 Models • 1 Protocol • 1 Academic Article • 1 Report
Other relevant information	7 AMIF project results 2 Daphne project results

The following chapters contain the conclusions of the 20 documents analysed, compiled and organized according to the most prevalent and common matters to all the documents and taking into consideration the methodological standards that validates these documents as adequate for this collection of Best-practices.

The best-practices suggested in this report are, therefore, organized in a sequential way which translates a mash between all best-practices identified, as follows:

- **Basic principles:** The basic principles identified in the majority of documents analysed to guarantee the minimal conditions for the development of any type of intervention with VoHT;
- **Theoretical framework of intervention:** The main theoretical perspectives that are present in the establishment of best-practices, which constitute themselves best-practices as they serve as the foundational ethical and methodological principles on which intervention is applied;
- **Best practices aimed at professionals assisting VoHT in their social integration:** Best practices on integration also address the specific competences, training and skills necessary for professionals with this complex task, as they constitute the bond of trust with the victim, adopting multiple tasks and functions.
- **Best practices of intervention:** These comprise specific interventions that have been found to effectively facilitate integration. They can be at different levels (e.g. individual counselling; workshops aimed specifically at VoHT; community activities) but by definition assume the previously delineated best practices aimed at professionals.
- **Pitfalls to avoid and specific challenges:** Finding the correct level of specificity is a challenge. On the one hand the best practices need to be relevant for different VoHTs in different contexts. On the other hand, they cannot be so general that they do not take into account the specific challenges faced by this population. In this respect, simple transfer of practices- say from victims of GBV to VoHT- is not enough. In addition, VoHT represents considerable cultural, social, ethnic, and gender identity variability, for which this report will address the potential aspects which are usually forgotten or others that need to be avoided in order to provide the best care in the integration of VoHT in the context of the present project.

2. Recommendations on the main theoretical perspectives

Introduction

From all the best practices analysed, the starting point should be to address the foundational generic principles that are found to be the starting point of any interventions with victims of Human Trafficking. These are validated guidelines which are internationally standardized by the IOM (IOM, 2003), by the United Nations (UN, 2000), and by the European Union in different sets of legislation¹² and depart from an understanding that basic physical, security, and psychological needs must be covered prior to attending to higher level objectives such as social integration.

These basic principles were found present in most of the documents analysed, according to the goal of these documents and their main focus, and clearly established the basic guidelines for what follows.

2.1 Basic principles

2.1.1 Victim's safety and protection

This is one of the most relevant aspects in all literature researched and a concern not only directed to the VoHT but also to the professionals assisting them. This is also a key principle defined by all of the above mentioned international institutions as it understands that are victims of a transnational crime with complex ramifications, which means there is a high degree of risk for the victim and a need for safety once she is in the assistance circuit and at whatever phase of it. Although total security can never be guaranteed, it is fundamental before any sort of intervention to make an individualized risk assessment, from a preventive perspective, which can provide information about the possible dangers the woman may face if assisted in a specific program. This risk assessment should explore the (1) the likelihood for the victim or her relatives are vulnerable to suffering physical or mental harm from traffickers or other persons involved in their trafficking and exploitation process, and (2) the danger faced by the victim that her participation in the program (by physically attending the program or via word of mouth from other victims) could expose her to being identified as a potential "traitor" by the traffickers.

The risks for backlash to which victims are exposed are higher in the cases of women who are collaborating with the authorities, for which it is important to take this factor into consideration when designing a risk assessment matrix.

This risk assessment should be carried out when the Victim enters the program and then periodically revised in different moments such as when there is a change of residence, change of area of the city for training or a job or other significant changes which can invalidate the previous risk assessment.

Along with this preventive risk assessment, the OIM also recommends each NGO to develop a risk management plan to address any situation that may arise, with concrete measures, protocols, and safety standards, fully transparent and documented. This plan is directed at professionals working with VoHT and establishes the standard ways in which professionals may handle risk situations targeted at them or at women.

2.1.2 Assurance of confidentiality and informed consent

The importance of confidentiality is also common to most best practices researched and a standard departure point for any sort of social intervention with VoHT. This issue is mainly connected with the victim's safety, respect for her privacy and prevention of stigmatization from third parties. Confidentiality translates into taking measures such as:

¹² Directive 2011/36/EU; Directive 2012/29/EU, amongst others.

- Ensuring the data is contained within the circuit of people in the NGO assisting VoHT and not available for others;
- Avoiding the disclosure of any sort of information that can identify the woman as a VoHT outside the NGO or service, except if the victims consents in a written form and is fully informed of the goals of this communication;
- Ensuring that paper copies with information related to the victim be kept under lock and key, and digital information be kept secure under a password:
- No information about a VoHT should be given or discussed over the phone;

Connected to the notion of confidentiality is the notion of informed consent, related to the obligation on the part of professionals to ensure that the victim is always informed about and understands the actions taken by NGO's or services and consents on these actions, within the principles of transparency and respect for her self-determination. This consent is particularly important in moments when professionals refer women to other services or coordinate with other professionals as it is the victim's right to agree on these actions, preferably by writing. Finally, some of the documents analysed focus on the idea of transparency, thinking of the continuous communication flow between professionals, services, and other actors not only to provide information but to coordinate about different aspects, ensuring the woman is aware of all the backstage steps at all times.

2.1.3 The coverage of basic needs

Considered by many of the documents analysed as one of the pillars of any sort of intervention with VoHT, the coverage of basic needs will determine the availability and disposition of the woman to enter a program and to make a successful personal process. Some of these basic needs are adequate and secure housing, food, clothing and access to healthcare. Other needs may be considered as essential depending on the woman's own perspective, reason why it is important for professionals to make sure to involve the woman in the identification and prioritization of her own needs¹³. Some countries in Europe and some municipal programs have specific allowances for VoHT and/or asylum seekers, which guarantee the link and lasting connection with the program. Although the purpose of this report is not to establish good practices in public policy, it is important to point out the influence of NGO's, Municipalities and civil society organizations in defining laws or other forms of support to ensure these rights, as they guarantee an easier and more successful process of integration. The implementation of policy and structures to support the rights of VoHT are essential for the effectiveness of any social integration endeavour.

Most documents analysed also refer to other needs which will follow the satisfaction of basic needs and that can, often, be at the same level of basic needs, although maybe not as easily identified. These are counselling, social support networks, social relations, language skills and channels of communication and social participation.

2.2 Best practices identified in terms of theoretical framework of action

After the basic principles, we will focus on the main recommendations and best practices identified in terms of the theoretical frame which helps to systematize the multifaceted and multidimensional nature of the complex psychosocial processes that define Human Trafficking.

¹³As an example, it is common that professionals don't prioritize or take into account the need that women express to economically support their families in the country of origin. This need, which is often the motivation behind the will to migrate in the first place, can undermine the woman's personal process as she will prioritize obtaining money through any means in order to send it home and won't have the availability to focus on a personal process.

As a main result it is important to point out that most documents analysed didn't have a clear introductory theoretical frame but revealed, throughout the document, scattered theoretical principles which constituted best-practices and recommendations for the integration of VoHT along with applicable and concrete best-practices.

To that end an effort is made to piece together the different components under the rubric of the frame identified.

1. Human Rights approach/Rights based approach: This is considered to be a mandatory theoretical frame in psychosocial intervention and specifically in the assistance to VoHT in their social integration. A Human Rights approach asserts that Human Trafficking constitutes, first and foremost, a serious violation of basic Human Rights and that any intervention must focus on and is required to ensure the protection of the victims and the restoration of the lost rights, such as free movement, free choice, safety, protection from violence, etc. The OIM (2010) asserts that "victims are rarely seen as the holders of rights. They are instead seen as 'instruments in investigations or prosecution. This approach is contrary to international and regional standards. It also has the potential to impede the physical, psychological and social recovery of the victim." Human rights are, thus, foundational as per the pyramid contemplated above; on the one hand social integration is untenable without basic human rights in place, and, on the other, social integration itself can be seen as an expression of Human Rights

2. Human Trafficking as a form of Gender based violence: The basic theoretical frame for understanding Trafficking of women is that this is considered to be a specific form of Gender Based Violence (GBV), due to its gender-specific nature. The Istanbul Convention (Council of Europe, 2011), incorporating the perspective of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, understands violence against women as "a violation of human rights and a form of discrimination against women and shall mean all acts of gender-based violence that result in, or are likely to result in, physical, sexual, psychological or economic harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life". The forms of violence that have been reported to be suffered in Human Trafficking, and especially for sexual exploitation, are physical, economical, rights privation, psychological and sexual violence and abuse, with consequences for physical and mental health:

This understanding is common to both Spanish and Italian Law (Ley 5/2008 in Spain and Decreto Legislativo 4 marzo 2014, n. 24 in Italy), who have both adopted the Istanbul Convention. Nevertheless, although the Spanish Law dedicates considerable attention to the definition of Trafficking as a form of GBV and to the implications that this perspective has, the Italian Law is vaguer and explores this connection less.

It is not always specifically mentioned in the documents analysed the connection between GBV and Human Trafficking, even when specifically addressing Trafficking for sexual exploitation, although it is perceived along the text that this perspective constitutes a frame which marks the development of all the other levels of intervention. Not losing sight of this perspective is a key recommendation to guarantee that the development of actions and activities is in line with the objectives of the assistance to victims of GBV. Also understanding the consequences of GBV in a victim's mental and physical health and the right which assists VoHT will be essential for further intervention, as will be developed further.

3. Gender-Specific assistance: Connected to the previous, one of the key recommendations refers to the importance of victims assistance needing to be gender-specific, understanding how the consequences of this crime affect women in a disproportionate way, as they constitute the majority of the victims, especially in Trafficking for sexual exploitation. The entire cycle of Trafficking has a gender impact, given the different possible steps of a Trafficking process, which include the previously referred forms of violence, as well as abuse of power and authority, humiliation and gender based physical and psychological violence. Therefore, the impacts of Trafficking in survivors' lives need to be addressed for an effective social inclusion from a gender perspective, which will allow the exposure and recuperation from the different power dynamics involved in Human Trafficking, which refer not only to the positions of dominance and abuse from the part of Traffickers but also to the way in which women are still understood as subordinate in society and having to comply with certain expected social roles. According to

Walby, S. & others (2016), “Specialised service provision needs to be gender specific. It needs to take account of complex intersections with other forms of disadvantage and vulnerability. It needs to recognise the gender-specific longer recovery time from the harms of trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation as compared with other forms.”

4. Theoretical frame towards prostitution: Some of the analysed reports and best-practices suggest that public policies which grant legal protection to women in prostitution benefit the detection of Human Trafficking, especially in what refers to (a) the use of Outreach methodology addressing women who sell sex and, therefore, potentially reaching VoHT; and (b) the decriminalization of prostitution in order to reduce the continuous victimisation of the most vulnerable women and enforce the prosecution of traffickers, who depend on the cooperation of the victims. The analysis of best practices didn't reveal major differences in practical recommendations between documents who put this view forward and other which don't, besides the ones addressing specifically to Public Policy. It was also observed that sometimes there were conceptual confusions in some of the best practices recommended as both voluntary sex work and sexual exploitation were included in recommendations without a clear distinction between the target group.

5. Intercultural approach: This approach is seen as a highly relevant theoretical background for the assistance to TCN VoHT and refugee women. These are populations which come from a broad spectrum of cultural backgrounds, leading to an adaptation effort from both sides in terms of communication and understanding of cultural meanings. The European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECRE, 2002), points to the fact that “cultural diversity is a characteristic feature of a democratic, pluralist Europe (...), culturally enriching our societies. Culture must not be seen as something static, but rather as constantly evolving and being enriched by a wide range of contribution”. It is therefore essential that this perspective is taken into account when designing and implementing a program, as well as that it is part of the professionals' training and performance. Its benefits are related to the prevention of acculturative stress and to a clearer understanding of the cultural framework in which women will be integrating into.

6. Empowerment perspective: This perspective is mentioned by most of the best practices and recommendations explored and entails supporting victims to develop skills toward independence and self-sufficiency and to be actively involved in their recovery and re/integration. Empowerment is often seen as a subjective notion but it can be understood as “a process through which an individual can develop his/her ability to stand independently, make his/her own decisions and show control over his/her life” (Talens, C. & Landman, C., 2003). The empowerment perspective can also be seen in two different perspectives: On one hand, a comprehensive understanding of the victim's life, comprising the available opportunities for work, education and training, access to physical and mental health services in the host country; and on the other hand the specific way in which service providers work with the VoHT and allows them to have an active role in their own process and be considered as active subjects and improving their independence. This perspective will allow victims to feel confident enough to “negotiate a place in society” (Andreatta, C., 2015), which translates into long-term goals and solutions. The VoHT builds resources, accompanied by professionals, which will be later reproduced in a progressively autonomous way, as empowerment does not result in immediate autonomy once women have access to services and assistance, but rather is dynamic, hence it is important to give value to small steps towards empowerment rather than expecting big changes. Women will possibly go back and forward between adhering to old ways and trying new approaches throughout their processes, hence the importance of recognizing and celebrating small victories, which will also serve as a motivation for women.

Practical examples of this perspective can be:

- Involving the victim in all decision-making processes;
- Assuring transparency in the flow of communication;
- Making sure plans are individualized and take the victim's input into account;

- Consider the victim's specific needs and enforce that she prioritizes these needs;
- Enforce that the woman makes decisions based on her own experience and on her personal strategies, supporting her along the way.

7. Multi-dimensional approach/ Holistic approach: Trafficking, as a complex experience, affects all aspects of life, including social, familial, psychological, physical and economic wellbeing. It involves many different experiential realms, from migration to multiple forms of violence, abuse, and deprivation. Given how comprehensive this experience is and how deeply it affects women's lives, a polyhedral response is needed to address the complex personal and social situation of the VoHTs. This means not to compartmentalize women's lives and instead acknowledging the systemic connections between all vital spheres and how they influence each other continuously. It is, therefore, important, to build a "full and diverse set of services" (Surtees, R., 2010) for women which are flexible enough to incorporate all different events that may be happening in women's lives and which may interfere with her personal process. As an example, it's worth mentioning that it is not uncommon for some legal and bureaucratic aspects of women's lives to impede their availability to commit to tight schedules for courses or work, for which the consideration of all spheres of life must be taken into account when designing an individual plan. This is also one of the reasons why any plan should be completely individualized.

8. Tailored approach: Following on the previous point, a tailor-made or individualised approach is crucial to the success of social integration of VoHT. The diversity of the victims in terms of origin, cultural background, trafficking process, forms of exploitation, debt to be paid, legal status, family and social relations, etc. manifests in a need for an individualised approach, designed upon a needs analysis, as suggested before. An assessment and assistance with a comprehensive scope and a tailored individual plan not only improves the chances of success but also is more empowering for women as it puts their specific needs in the centre of the intervention, understanding them as active subjects. The design of itineraries and plans for social integration should, therefore, be flexible and allow accommodations that will be negotiated and adapted to the specific idiosyncrasies of the woman. This also means that the woman is at the centre of the intervention.

9. Women and their benefit at the centre of the intervention: All previous points, and the ones to come, already indicate the importance of putting the VoHT and their needs in the centre of the intervention. Although the prosecution of traffickers (which is a legal endeavour) and/or meeting specific statistical outcomes are certainly of importance, the psychosocial wellbeing of the VoHT is the priority and must not be impeded by any other concern. This also means, once again, that it is the victim's specific needs that drive the process of intervention, be they the basic needs mentioned above or others such as counselling, social support networks, social relations, amongst others.

A victim centered approach also entails that the multi-agency and cooperation between the different actors in which the woman is at the centre from the different angles of the intervention, establishing steps to follow and decision making according to this principle.

One example of this theoretical approach can be the funding for training after a needs assessment, which some documents identified as a particular good practice as it allows women to be independent from other sources of income like prostitution or underground economy activities, giving them enough time to focus on their own personal process.

10. Incorporate lessons learnt from the experiences of survivors of Trafficking: Related to the previous, and more than relying only on theoretical approaches, the documents analysed reveal that it is vital to integrate the experiences of women who endured situations of Trafficking in order to understand their main difficulties and the solutions they found that helped them the most, therefore shifting the unbalanced gender and power dynamics of women's lives and empowering their right to make choices and their decision making capacities. Women who endured Trafficking may bring professionals and other women new understandings and suggestions on how to

tackle certain issues, the reason for which the creation of mentoring groups and peer-to-peer support are worth contemplating. These two suggestions must abide by the same security issues as any other intervention but can be very beneficial for women in the way they break down the power dynamics that exist in the relationship with the professionals, build credibility and connect the woman at a more empathetic level.

11. Intersectional approach: This approach was mentioned by some of the documents analysed and it expressed the importance of understanding the different aspects of possible vulnerability that cross women's lives, such as gender, age, education level, racial and ethnic backgrounds- particularly characteristic of VoHT and Asylum seekers- acknowledging the multiple identities that characterize each person. These factors inevitably relate to the individualized approach mentioned before, as they configure the individuality of each woman, something that often gets forgotten in the simplified categorization of vulnerable people according to the main cause of their vulnerability.

12. Socio-affective methodology: This is another mentioned theoretical frame, particularly identified for training courses with VoHT, which translates under the principle of emotional connection with the environment and subjects approached, instead of working from a mere rational point of view. Social maladjustments and difficulties in social integration can frequently come from social coping strategies that were learned along situations of vulnerability and require "*reprogramming*" for the person to develop other better working strategies (Neely-Prado A, Navarrete G, Huepe D., 2019). Particularly in the case of VoHT, who have endured traumatic and painful situations and come from another cultural background than the one they find in the host country, the connection to emotions is a valuable way of communicating and learning.

Along with this methodology comes the centrality of principles such as:

- equal treatment for all women and prevention of all possible discriminatory situations;
- empowerment perspective through emotional connection;
- Continuous attitudes of respect, proximity, simplicity, equality and easiness to express feelings;

13. Assurance of Ethical principles: This constitutes another foundational theoretical approach put into practice through the establishment of mechanisms to monitor professionals, programs and stakeholders.¹⁴ Although not exclusive to Human Trafficking, the focus on Ethical principles gains particular relevance when addressing victims of multiple rights violations and it is important that all actors in the network of services act according to these same principles;

14. Advocacy and education approach: This approach, present in many of the documents analysed, refers to the importance of programs and projects going beyond the assistance level by having a transformative action, raising awareness, sensitizing and educating other institutions such as potential employers, public policies legislators and public administration in general, health professionals, law enforcers, etc. These constitute measures which indirectly contribute to the social integration of VoHT, often affected by the lack of openness and interest from the part of other social actors not familiar with their specific situation and by an insufficient set of comprehensive solutions. The implication of the community and civil society, being on the other side of the integration process, is crucial to a successful match between the woman and society.

15. Conceptual clarity around the concept of integration: The lack of a clear concept was identified as a theoretical difficulty in integration of VoHT, as the indicators of success are often blurry or ambiguous, which translates into unclear measures and activities, since the objectives are possibly vague. It is, then, important to operationalise this conceptual framework, translating it into practical and measurable indicators and specific actions. Time for analysis and reflection is recommended, as well as the victim's opinion and perception of it.

¹⁴ More on specific Ethical principles can be found in Surtees, R. (2013) Ethical principles in the re/integration of trafficked persons. Experiences from the Balkans. KBF and NEXUS Institute

16. Working in a network: As many of the previous points have been suggesting, the social integration of VoHT depends a lot on the coordination between different programs, services, professionals and other social actors. This is because, as mentioned, Human Trafficking constitutes a multifaceted experience which affects all vital spheres, and for this reason it needs a holistic approach. Nevertheless, this approach is not exclusive to the professional or service/NGO of reference and is often distributed through different actors involved. An example of this would be the case of women who are involved in a training program, have counselling in a different program, do job search in another NGO, etc. This dispersion demands a level of coordination between the actors involved in order to (a) prevent the duplicity of tasks; (b) unite efforts; (c) find common strategies; and (d) ensure all resources are activated and all options have been thought of.

All the above-mentioned theoretical perspectives will be translated into more concrete recommendations on the following chapter.

3. Best-practices aimed at professionals to accompany and support VoHT in their social integration in the host country

Introduction

The success of VoHT social integration lies on a complex network of activities and actions, of which the professionals assisting them are also a big and determinant part.

In this chapter we will focus on the good practices and recommendations aimed at professionals that were found to be relevant in the long process of integration. These are recommendations both at a more theoretical level as well as direct intervention practices.

Professionals need both knowledge and skills; they need to be aware of a series of issues- many of them addressed thus far- germane to multiple aspects of VoHT and they need to be able to apply that knowledge in an effective, respectful and culturally appropriate manner.

“Professional” is a rather generic term, and although this chapter has broad application, the principal focus is on psychosocial care. That being said, a multidisciplinary team is essential for effective social integration, and as such best practices start with the team of professionals, although the focus of this chapter is individual competence.

3.1 The team of professionals

Due to the complex consequences of Trafficking, professionals of multiple areas are often involved in the assistance, care and accompaniment of VoHT. In most documents analysed the preferred format is a multidisciplinary team, usually composed of professionals such as social workers, psychologists, psychiatrists, social educators, lawyers, peer workers and outreach workers. This was observed both at the NGO level as well as in the case of municipal services assisting survivors.

Transparency between team members while keeping confidentiality is one of the challenges when assisting VoHT, given that all life's spheres are connected but not all information is necessarily relevant for all members of the team. It is important, therefore, that the teams have both methodology supervision and a more self-care approach supervision to strengthen communication and resolve possible issues of trust between professionals. This is a supervision focused on the team itself, and we will address later supervision focused on handling the specificities of intervention.

3.2 Professional principles

The principles, that serve as compass for professionals, are framed by the generic principles described in Chapters 1 and 2, in a more generalist way. Nevertheless, the IOM (IOM, 2007) also applies the following set of generic social and health care principles for assistance to VoHT, in line with the previously mentioned:

- Informed consent
- Principle of non-discrimination
- Confidentiality
- Self-determination and participation:
- Individualized treatment and care;
- Comprehensive continuum of care;
- Equitable distribution of resources.

More specific to VoHT, two other specific principles were identified in the best practices that were reviewed. It is worth noting that these principles contemplate the professional not simply as a technician carrying out certain procedures but rather an active participant who has relational impact. These two principles are directly linked to some of the professional and complementary skills listed below:

1. **Equal treatment of all women and non-discrimination principles:** between women from certain nationalities, sexual orientations or religions; women more or less open to establish a relationship or different dispositions to interact with professionals or other sources of difference. Although professionals are trained to minimize the effects of their own personal stereotypes, research shows how implicit bias may hinder the relationship with diverse populations who respond in diverse ways, reason why this principle is to be continuously enforced and monitored.
2. **Minimizing the power imbalance:** The IOM (2007, pp. 224) reminds us that “there is a power imbalance in the relationship between the health professional (e.g., nurse, doctor, psychologist, or social worker) and the client/ patient.” This often-forgotten aspect of the relationship may influence the victims’ resistance to ask questions or voice their opinions, for fear of losing the relationship with the professional or overstepping boundaries. It is highly important for the professional to keep this in mind, making an effort to reduce the perception and consequences of this unbalance, avoiding the reproduction of the same power dynamics experienced by the women when in a trafficking situation such as the use of an authoritarian tone, inflexible information, unilateral communication, etc.

3.3 Professional skills

The assistance and accompaniment of VoHT constitutes a specialized type of psychosocial intervention due to the multicity of aspects involved in Trafficking. This means that professionals must be trained and specialized in the matter, as well as develop certain professional skills which are essential for good quality assistance and effective management of the complex relationship with the VoHT. These are the main ones that were underlined by the documents analysed:

- **Communication skills:** Communication is a key skill, especially important in the establishment of a trust relationship with VoHT who come from different cultural backgrounds and show some resistance to trusting professionals. Communication must be clear and informative and, at the same time, respect the timing and availability of the woman and be adapted to her capacity to follow certain complex information that may seem abstract or unintelligible for her given cultural differences;
- **Cultural competence:** More than knowing some background information about the countries of origin of the women assisted, it is important that professionals develop their cultural competence which ensures that previous biases and stereotypes don’t influence the assistance provided. Cultural aspects such as religion, gender norms, and prevalence of certain practices may hinder communication and understanding, reason why the professional must assure that the clash of cultures doesn’t damage the trust relationship through non-judgemental attitudes and minimization of the effect of stereotypes and previously conceived cultural notions;
- **Flexibility and adaptability:** the personal and social situation of VoHT is often a maze of events which seem to unfold in circles and not in a straight line, for which the professional should be able to navigate through uncertainty and ever-changing situations and adapt the responses to these changes;

- **Relational skills:** Sensitivity and respect are fundamental to the development of a trusting relationship with which to form the basis for any effective intervention. At a superficial level it may appear that these are simply *common sense*, however, given the complexity of the VoHT experiences and the demands required of the professional, maintaining a sensitive and respectful relationship requires attention (and as per below, training). The following complementary **attitudes** were identified as important to facilitate this process:
 - Encouraging;
 - Non-judgemental;
 - Calm and comforting;
 - Understanding and empathetic;
 - Respectful of diversity.

- **Respecting confidentiality:** Although not conventionally considered to be a “skill”, given the emotional demands of social care with VoHT, respecting confidentiality is noted as a professional skill as it is of paramount importance, and, indeed, was one theme raised by victims when addressing the development of their processes. VoHTs comprise a small community, and simply anonymity (e.g. Ms. X) is insufficient given that with little information a VoHT is potentially identifiable. This means that professionals must be sufficiently attentive to self-care (see below) to ensure that they do not inadvertently break confidentiality.

- **Gender perspective:** All intervention is developed with the identification of the necessity of gender-specific expertise in key vital components. Not only should assistance be gender-specific, so should be the response and analysis of all of the key elements of women's lives such as access to employment, education and training, access to Health, family relations, etc. This gender-specific expertise should also be applied to the training of external professionals such as law enforcement agencies, in order to promote the “respectful treatment of victims.” Gender-specific and gender perspective also means taking into account the specific risks that women who were VoHT faced in the past and may well be facing at present.

- **Self-care and burn-out prevention:** Given the psychological demands of working with VoHT, it is important that professionals closely monitor their emotional well-being and ensure that they maintain appropriate professional limits in order to mitigate burn-out and secondary trauma as well as to ensure the VoHT's wellbeing. Specialized supervision with attention to the professional's well-being is, therefore, recommended.

3.4 Professional's training

The above skills and principles, in the context of work with VoHT are complex and challenging skills that require attention and development, and thus training should be made available given, as well, that this is a rather concrete field. Training should be specialized and continuous as the characteristics of Trafficking keep changing as do the concerns and situation of the victims as well. Therefore, training should provide the elements for understanding the ever-changing reality of Trafficking, along with techniques of intervention that should be improved by practice and experience.

Some experiences revealed that professionals had some negative experiences working in this field due to lack of adequate training in Trafficking issues (Budeci, A. and Vogiatzi, M., Eds., 2009), and experienced:

- Burnout due to the complexity of the situations and lack of responses available;

- Relational challenges of working with people in dire situations such as transference;
- Emotional burnout;
- Secondary PTSD, due to working in such close relation to women who suffered traumatic events.

Most best practices and Recommendations that discuss the training of professionals identified the following main fields specific to the assistance of VoHT:

- Feminism
- Gender
- Interculturality
- Human rights approach
- Socio-affective methodology
- Knowledge of migrations
- Labour market knowledge
- Specific multidisciplinary intervention

3.5 Interprofessional recommendations

The importance of the promotion of local partnerships and networks, as well as the coordination between stakeholders like NGO's, Municipal actors and civil society organizations is beneficiary for the VoHT, stressing the important role of Municipalities which can take specific measures in terms of applied services, protected job opportunities, safe-housing, prioritizing their employability through direct measures, etc. In this same line, it is recommended that information and best practices are shared amongst partners working in the same field and generating strong network synergies.

This perspective should incorporate a victim-centered approach that reflects their specific needs and puts them in the centre of the coordinated actions for social inclusion. Women should be the protagonists of the process and professionals de facilitators, reason why the network of professionals assisting the victim should be a circular and non-hierarchical one, with the woman in the centre.

4. Main recommendations and best practices in social integration

Introduction

This section focuses on concrete practices developed in programs aimed at the social integration of women who were VoHT and/or asylum seekers, following the previous more foundational and theoretical recommendations. As an introductory reflection it is necessary to mention briefly some of the consequences of Human Trafficking in women's lives, so it is clearer the level of social intervention needed to respond to these.

The consequences of Trafficking and the need to identify areas of intervention

The experience of Trafficking is known to trigger a set of psychosocial consequences which affect the victims in a multi-dimensional form. The recommendations mentioned before about the necessity for multidisciplinary teams answer to this same finding as the complexities of Trafficking bring consequences to all spheres of life. This leads to identifying a set of components that are important to analyse separately, although, as seen before, the intervention processes should be addressed from a comprehensive approach which understands the interconnections between all these factors.

These consequences, identified in the documents analysed, can be summarized as follows:

- **Consequences in Social life:** Social withdrawal and unsatisfied social needs; loss of social status and position; loss of job; non-transferable working skills and certificates; language barriers which difficult socialization; loss of social network; damage to the relationship with own children or losing contact with them; loss of housing, among others;
- **Consequences in Psychological aspects and wellbeing:** General psychological distress; fear; anxiety; depression; feelings of being responsible for what happened; nightmares; PTSD; CT; feelings of loss of dignity; shame; trust issues; deterioration of cognitive function; diminished interest or pleasure in activities; suicide attempts or/and ideation; fatigue and loss of energy, etc. It is important to notice that some literature establishes a clear correlation between VoHT and victims of torture in terms of the impact of the lived experience and the psychological consequences, which similarly lead to integration difficulties. (Budeci, A. and Vogiatzi, M., Eds., 2009).
- **Consequences in Physical Health:** Sexually transmitted infections and other diseases derived from the lack of control for sexual and reproductive options; sequels of physical violence (uncured broken limbs, scars, deafness, blindness, etc.);

These consequences, some of which will be explained in more detail in the following pages, gives us a clear idea of the complexities of social intervention with women VoHT and justify the detailed analysis of each of these spheres separately. One of the documents analysed (Surtees, R. 2010) delineates these spheres by outlining the main components identified by most best practices analysed concerning the different levels of intervention towards social inclusion of VoHT. This approach presents a matrix created to monitor reintegration programs that combines most of the approaches from other best practices analysed, for which reason it is used as a collection of markers of social integration of VOHT.

The following recommendations were, therefore, organized into the different spheres of life which interact and articulate in a new setting and demand from the part of the professionals certain specific strategies which will be presented as the key recommendations.

It is also important to mention at this stage that women who were trafficked may experience difficulties expressing their specific demands, either because of psychological trauma, lack of knowledge of the services available, linguistic limitations, or lack of trust in professionals. In this case, it doesn't mean that the woman doesn't have needs and requests, but they are not expressed openly. The professional must be able to explore the implicit secondary requests.

Although the following spheres are interconnected and mutually influence each other, they still have to be understood independently, to address different responses according to the possible needs detected. These areas are:

1. Safe and affordable accommodation
2. Legal status
3. Professional/employment opportunities
4. Education and training opportunities: Including language and social integration
5. Security and safety
6. Healthy social environment (including anti-discrimination and anti-marginalisation)
7. Social well-being and positive interpersonal relations
8. Economic situation
9. Physical well-being
10. Mental well-being
11. Access to services and opportunities
12. Motivation and commitment to re/integration process
13. Legal issues and court proceedings
14. Assistance to secondary beneficiaries

Before entering each of these aspects it is important to point out that the level of support that women need will vary across time, as women evolve in their personal and social processes. This means that the time dedicated to interventions can also vary across time, being probably more intense in the beginning of the process. Different women can have different needs according to other social and personal factors such as social network, level of idiom, etc. so the overall recommendations are that time is tailored individually, as needed, and flexible enough to change.

Main recommendations

1. *Safe and affordable accommodation*

Secure/safe housing is one of the basic needs that VoHT and Asylum seekers have difficulties locating on their own, given the informal networks and black market surrounding the renting of accommodations, their legal status, the common lack of a working contract and having little to no income. Their tight economic situation usually leaves them exposed to poor living conditions, shared rooms and food deprivation in order to pay the bills.

These difficulties don't only refer to availability and housing conditions but also to safety, given that women often live with traffickers or other people who control them, earning that the basic conditions of safety are not assured. Some women live in specific towns or neighbourhoods known to the police as having a higher risk due to the presence of trafficking networks.

Victims who have entered an assistance circuit, through NGOs or Municipal services, usually pass through women's shelters and safe houses before independent housing, and document analysis revealed that some women are critical of these because of the existence of strict rules, overcrowded spaces, lack or disrespect for their privacy and excessive limitation of their personal liberty. Further complicating the matter are the “lack of specialised shelters, limited number of places in shelter accommodation, uneven availability of accommodation and services in different parts of the country, lack of long-term options for survivors who continue to need assistance, and inadequate funding.” (GRETA, 2019, pp.6). This means that throughout her stay in the host country the woman often has housing related difficulties, when housing constitutes a basic need for anyone and a factor of extreme vulnerability when it is missing. This situation limits both her own success in a program and her own continuous social integration, for which reasons why it is essential to develop strategies to tackle this issue.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding safe and affordable accommodation

- Ensure the woman has access to and is in contact with all the public services which can help finding, renting, furnishing and supporting the expenses of vulnerable populations such as VoHT;
- Provide training and accompaniment on handling payments (Gas, electricity, etc.) rent and contract obligations. This will facilitate the woman’s understanding of how bureaucracy works in the country of destination and will provide a first step to handle these issues autonomously;
- Be informed about the areas of the city where there is a risk of encountering traffickers, other VoHT or other people connected to the network of people involved in the posterior process of exploitation. Advise the victim on choosing a place to live;

2. Legal status

VoHT without a legal status are more likely to end up in exploitative work in the underground economy, without benefiting from the advantages of the labour protection laws that exist in the host country.

It is common that victims of trafficking don’t have enough information about their legal rights and obligations nor about the implications of being recognised as a victim of trafficking.

The absence of a legal status not only constitutes an impediment for social integration but also a risk factor for re-trafficking: it leaves women unprotected, unable to find jobs and more vulnerable to entering a circuit of trafficking once again to another region or country in the EU. This is just another expression of the continuum of violence from which many VoHT don’t manage to escape for large periods of their lives.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding Legal Status

- Although “the legal status of a person and available assistance are intertwined” (Council of the Baltic Sea States, 2018), actions towards inclusion should not depend on the legal status of the victim at a given moment, even if the legal status may hinder the person’s availability or eligibility to undertake certain steps towards inclusion. This refers to any sort of actions, from medical assistance to social assistance, access to services, etc.
- Actions for inclusion should keep in mind the importance of contributing to acquiring or keeping a legal status, through activities and interventions which are valued by the host country such as cultural integration courses, language courses, etc.;
- Services should be offered to all VoHT, regardless of their Legal Status, as not doing so would represent a violation of the non-discrimination principle;

- Regardless of the previous recommendation, it is important that VoHT are directed to employment services and specific training once their legal status is either legal or about to be legal. This is due to the attestation that their ineligibility to access the labour market can be demotivating and generate false hopes, having a negative impact on their process;
- The victim should be informed, at all times, about changes on her legal status and of the requisites regarding different options (asylum seeking, legal because of collaboration with authorities, legal linked to job contracts, etc.).

3. Professional/employment opportunities

In the European society, social inclusion is very connected to access to employment, as work is a central axis of both personal and social life in nowadays society, not only for economic reasons but also for others related to participation, socialization and purpose.

Women VoHT who participated in social inclusion programs also revealed the crucial importance of employment for their social inclusion related to reasons such as economic, socialization, life meaning, independence, validation and contribution and feeling of belonging to society.

Unemployment is known to be one of the risk factors for social exclusion, especially in the case of vulnerable groups such as immigrants and asylum seekers and, obviously, VoHT. Actually, the expression *social exclusion* has entered the common lexicon in direct connection with high unemployment rates in Europe, mainly in the 80's (Kronauer, 1998), although the concept was later developed to incorporate a wider range of dimensions of social life. Therefore, it's opposite- social inclusion- is particularly connected to the centrality of employment in one's life, at the same time as it constitutes an interconnected dynamic process.

Employment is also known for being a symbol of status amongst migrants in general and VoHT and Asylum seekers are no exception. The importance given to employment goes beyond the economic and social inclusion dimensions and acquires both a figurative meaning and a way of socialization and, therefore, integration.

One of the documents analysed (Life Beyond the Shelter, 2019) revealed as a finding from their project that only after a year of stable employment were women able to have time to incorporate in their daily lives other activities of social inclusion such as "dedicate time to dedicate to their physical well-being, education or social activities"(pp.10). This shows the centrality of employment as a base for the development of all other social activities.

Given the diversity of trafficking situations it is not easy to establish specific barriers to access to employment opportunities, but the documents analysed reveal a set of barriers which can be compiled in the following:

- Low skilled professional profiles or profiles that are not adequate for the European demands;
- Lack of recognition of studies and qualifications, no certificates to demonstrate them and/or no possibility of accessing processes of validation or equivalence of studies;
- Difficult access to information about job opportunities (due to language, cultural codes, lack of technological means, digital literacy, lack of understanding of the formal job market, amongst others);
- Direct or indirect discrimination in job searching and job keeping;
- Lack of job-related soft skills: communication styles, unwritten rules on social interactions, etc.
- Cultural differences concerning interactional style, labour norms and pre-labour skills, etc.
- Psychological and sequelae of trafficking resulting in diminished social and cognitive function

These are not the only difficulties observed. Some of the challenges for employment and economic inclusion have to do with the characteristics of the market itself:

- Structural Racism and Xenophobia;

- Employer's reluctance to hire migrants, especially VoHT and victims of other forms of violence;
- Feminized stereotypical jobs as the only ones available;
- Employers reluctance to accept certain specific conditions of VoHT (time to manage legal paperwork, specific needs, etc.);
- Unsuitable job opportunities due to being unsafe, exposing the woman as a VoHT or other reasons;
- Exclusionary socialization dynamics in the workplace.

Due to these challenges, many women, when they disconnect from trafficking networks, end up working in precarious feminized industries such as domestic work or as cleaners in the services industry. These constitute areas of difficult or non-existing regulation, often leading to a perpetuation of labour exploitation, getting paid less than they are entitled to, working irregular and early/late and split shifts, working with no contract or with temporary contracts with few benefits and that are not sufficient to maintain their legal status or working longer hours than stipulated in their contracts.

According to Talens & Landman in the document analysed (Talens, C. & Landman, C., 2003), "women remain vulnerable to exploitation due to their lack of knowledge about labour legislation but also because of their dependency on employers for working permits. As individuals it is often difficult for them to negotiate working conditions and claim their rights". Therefore, NGOs across Europe dedicated to assisting TCN VoHT usually offer courses of preparation for the job market and preparation and accompaniment for job search, having understood the relevance of work for social integration.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding Professional and employment opportunities

- Understand that VoHT need time to feel psychologically stable before they can access the job market and find new routines and habits: it is important not to rush this process;
- To help with this process we can highlight the circuit of programs which focus on "establishing a structured daily routine, strengthening social skills, assessing individual capabilities, increasing work capacity/resilience, and conveying core values necessary for the workforce such as punctuality, dependability, orderliness, and flexibility" (Sander, C., 2018);
- In the case of women staying in shelter houses or similar situations where they have enough time to dedicate to directed activities with professionals, Sander (Sander C., 2018) suggests that women can learn and produce something concrete (like sewing products, for example) which also constitutes a therapeutic process and is helpful to prevent anxiety and cyclic thinking about their situation in general, directing efforts to pleasurable activities;
- Providing training to women about setting up co-operatives that are more flexible and adaptable to their specific needs is also a recommendation of some of the documents analysed. Self-regulating cooperatives constitute a strong socialization and inclusion method which averts most of the barriers previously identified. These autonomous associations that a collective of women working in a specific employment sector can establish (e.g. domestic work), are based on the principle of shared responsibility in which all have a say in the management. The co-operative's objectives are set by the members themselves, and as such they are better suited to the needs of the workers and provide a foundation from which to negotiate good quality and stable employment.

As Talens & Landman suggest, "Knowing how to set up a co-operative helps women to learn about a specific sector of work and develop personal management skills. It can also be useful for women returning to their countries of origin to create alternatives to unemployment and is therefore a strong tool for empowerment." (Talens, C. & Landman, C., 2003).

- Specialized services to assist in the reintegration into the labour market are mentioned by most of the documents analysed, accompanied by a focus on the reduction of gender inequality in the workplace as part of a more global strategy. These services or programs must focus on identifying the skills and

competences that can be transferable to the local employment field in order to ensure that women's talents are taken in consideration, while they should also be a part of the victim's recuperation process.

These programs should define a personalized job plan, which should be:

- Realistic in terms of time and requirements;
 - Adapted to the person's skills and preferences, performing an initial skills assessment where interests, attitudes, skills, commitment and motivations are studied;
 - Acknowledge the person's agency through her active participation in key decisions and around her own knowledge;
 - Match the demands of the local job market;
 - Be a long-term plan.
- This last point- being a long-term plan- was frequently stressed by all documents analysed, as VoHT frequently suffer from the above mentioned consequences of their Trafficking experience and therefore require stable long-term processes in order to recover.
 - A job plan should include satellite activities such as:
 - Vocational training
 - Job guidance and accompaniment, with a focus on possible discriminations and ways of avoiding and resisting them, from a Human Rights perspective;
 - Training on the specific labour market characteristics, which vary geographically and according to the employment sector;
 - Skills building, especially soft skills;
 - On the job training and study visits which have proven to be very successful in experiences conducted in Italy. Results show that companies often hired women who did their training with them, although finding companies willing to provide this level of training and accompaniment wasn't always easy;
 - Information on labour law and rights;
 - Some of the documents analysed also referred to the importance to take work-life balance into consideration when defining programs, training or suggesting job offers. Due to the lack of social or family network, often women are the only caretakers of their children and have no care alternatives. Providing childcare and programming activities for the times when children are at school were two of the strategies suggested by the documents analysed for the implementation of programs;
 - The employer's implication and commitment were identified as a key factor to the continuation of jobs and, therefore, to social inclusion. The barriers to access the labour market previously identified are often minimized with the previous sensitization of possible employers. This can also be enforced through research on employer's needs and suiting training and skills to those needs;
 - The creation of partnerships and a network of employers, business and NGO's, collaborating in a long-term relationship, so there is a continuous stream of information is advisable. It is also advised to maintain a database of potentially interested companies open to vocational training and direct job insertion

4. *Education and training opportunities: Including language and social integration*

To assure the integration in the job market it is essential to develop specific training to facilitate the betterment of skills and specific technical knowledge which will allow this objective. As mentioned before, migrant women and especially those who were VoHT and Asylum seekers usually experience barriers to employment that are related, amongst other things, to the mismatch between their knowledge and skills and the demands of the job market for highly skilled and certified workers, leaving many of these women with no other choice but accessing feminized

and precarious jobs. Even the access to these jobs, like cleaners or supermarket attendants, demand some skills that many women don't fulfil, starting by literacy, basic calculus or use of computers.

For women to get training in specific labour sectors one of the basic requisites is the learning of the language. Local language competence is understood both by professionals and by women as one of the most relevant skills for social integration. It is common that TCN spend several years in the host country without developing language skills at the conversation level. The case of Nigerian women living in Austria and in Spain for over 10 years without being able to speak the language relates directly to the lack of social inclusion in the host country and closed network of relationships amongst the Nigerian community. Linguistic competence is not simply transactional-necessary for work and other related interactions-but also represents, facilitates, and indeed constitutes the integration process in as much as it is central to being part of a given community.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding Education and Training opportunities: Including language and social integration

- **Integration courses**
 - Intensive language courses and, if needed, literacy classes, with a particular focus on real life interactions. These should be free courses or with very low fees. The duration of these courses will depend on the women's previous knowledge of the language and her literacy level but no more than 4 months, according to most Recommendations;
 - Language training and literacy classes should be defined according to women's needs and using adapted methodologies for adults usually not accustomed to the standard methods of education practiced in Europe: long hours in classrooms, individual study, less visual learning, theoretical learning, etc.;
 - Given that language is a factor of integration directly related to employment it is recommended that classes can also incorporate aspects of working life, using work examples, work situations, specific working objects, calculus classes made with money exchanges and other adequate examples;
 - Social orientation courses: information on the city or town of residence, transport, how to access housing, employment, education, social security, health care, use of public services.
 - Information on rights and obligations;
 - orientation towards a job: training towards employment and mainstreaming into vocational training schemes, enrolment in local or national employment agencies. Follow-up is provided on an individual basis.

- **Vocational courses:**
 - Orientation and mainstreaming to existing higher education structures for those women who are qualified either from their country of origin or who have more acquired credentials (i.e. avoid cultural disqualification in assuming that all VoHT have little or no education)
 - Vocational training in specific courses and fields taking into consideration women's interests and previous skills;
 - Courses should complement women's skills instead of generating radical shifts;
 - Although some vocational courses may seem shorter and grant easy access to a job, they usually lead to precarious jobs which perpetuate exploitative situations. It may be relevant to explore other alternatives to feminized courses and jobs in other markets, taking advantage of some of the women's skills such as their native language, their possible previous work experience often in crafts or markets, etc.
 - Career planning follow-up, ensuring the long-term perspective and the definition of different steps towards multi-leveled goals;
 - Generalized regular basis communication and follow-up ;
 - Skills Transferability is pointed out as a good option for the often lack of preparation for the host countries working market, accompanying the woman in the identification of her skills and transferability options for skills recognized in the host country.

- On the job training was mentioned to be a particularly good practice as it connects the woman with a real

working environment where she can apply the knowledge gained, keeping her motivated and contributing for a sense of belonging and common goals, especially if this is teamwork. Also training with possible employers is a good strategy to assure the match between the vocational training and the future employment options and constitutes an enriching and motivating experience for the woman. In case this best-practice is followed, it is important to perform close follow-ups with motivational interviews and regular contacts both with the woman and with the trainer/employer.

- Some of the documents analysed focused on the relevance of assuring financial aid for transport while women are participating in training activities. Although some women may be receiving some sort of subsidy from the government, many are expected to participate in trainings paying transportation with their own money, which is often scarce. This may lead to demotivation and lack of participation due to lack of financial means;
- Just like in the previous measures for employment, taking into account work-life balance measures is considered relevant for motivation, accessibility equitable distribution of time;
- In this same line, some of the documents analysed insist on the relevance of providing a childcare service to allow women to participate in courses and activities;
- Some documents analysed mention the practice of Training peer educators so that women who were VoHT can participate in NGO's and other services assisting other women. These training can constitute an opportunity also for the woman to somehow deal with the negative consequences of Trafficking, but it is important to firstly assess the availability of jobs in NGO's and Public Services to employ these trainees.¹⁵
- Most documents analysed underline how relevant it is that education and training processes are planned for the long-term, suggestively for a period of around 2 years and at least 6 months for specific vocational training but these numbers can vary across organizations and depending on the victim's specific needs. This is due to the constant process of adaptation which the victim will endure and all the consequences mentioned before which constraint the woman's availability, motivation and capacity.

5. Security and safety

Due to the criminal activity involved in Trafficking, women who were VoHT often have a sense of insecurity or are actually in a position of risk as a consequence of their situation. As mentioned in previous chapters, it is essential to assure the effective safety and feeling of safety of women in any sort of program for social integration, bearing in mind the possible obstacles for integration in case safety is not assured. As it will be developed in point 13, many VoHT receive threats to their physical wellbeing that sometimes become effective, as well as coercion and other forms of psychological violence. Women in these situations are not comfortable participating in activities for social inclusion and neither should they, as they may be exposing themselves to an increase of insecurity.

Discrimination also constitutes a form of insecurity to the VoHT and, at the same time, disrespects their basic rights. The known anti-immigration sentiments in many European countries, including Italy and Spain, aggravate the consequences of trafficking and perpetuate a sense of persecution and unwantedness which is contrary to social integration.

¹⁵ Important to notice that this recommendation was mentioned in the Netherlands, where prostitution is regulated and abundant in several cities, generating a normalization of such services and demand for such workers. This doesn't necessarily reflect the reality of countries where prostitution is either criminalized or unregulated. Also, it refers to empowering a group of both sex workers and women VoHT, which is not a practiced shared by most recommendations guides due to security issues and to the understanding of these being two different realities. Finally, it also suggests that peer educator should be a certified professional, something that is also not valid in most European countries.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding Security and safety

- Explore with the victims the real risks that she can be exposed to, helping her identify these risks and defining the measures to minimise them. This should be done through an individualized risk assessment, which should be comprehensive and done periodically, as explained in more detail in Chapter 2;
- Security also passes through housing conditions, which should be addressed and explored with the VoHT, as explained in Point 1;
- Assure that victims participating in measures for social integration can interact with other potential victims without that posing a safety issue. This doesn't necessarily apply to women who are Asylum seekers, reason why each case should be addressed separately;
- Take active steps towards the prevention of discrimination and discriminatory interventions.

6. Healthy social environment (including anti-discrimination and anti-marginalisation)

Social inclusion passes through many factors, some of which were already explained, but ultimately is more than an accumulation of topics - it constitutes a complex network of connecting spheres which provide a global sense of well-being. This systemic perspective understands the complexities of personal well-being in the way it connects with the social environment, experienced differently by everyone. Professionals assisting VoHT and Asylum seekers have reported to have witnessed specific discrimination towards these women in different spheres of life. This experience of racism and xenophobia against immigrants and Asylum seekers is often enforced by the media, which portrays an image of asylum seekers as criminals. This experience translates in many forms, from direct expressions of racism, police raids, indirect forms of discriminations, racial profiling and generalised social criminalisation. Other documents analysed mentioned discrimination based on sex or origins as a barrier to inclusion.

In the specific case of women trafficked for sexual exploitation it is common that they experience prejudiced, degrading and humiliating attitudes from society towards women selling sex, which contributes to their marginalisation, trauma and difficulties for posterior integration.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding Healthy social environment (including anti-discrimination and anti-marginalisation)

- Grant the prevention of discrimination and discriminatory interventions;
- Sensitise the network of services in order to prevent discrimination and strengthen the bonds with these services;
- Broach the topics of racism and xenophobia with VoHTs given that it is uncomfortable for them to address with autochthonous care providers;
- Support the women, through small courses or informative training capsules, to recognize and respond to prejudice, bias and unfair treatment, both at a personal level as well as at a legal level;
- Inform the victim of anti-discrimination measures available so that she knows her rights and who to address in case they are violated.

7. Social well-being and positive interpersonal relations

As in the case of the previous point, social well-being depends on an infinite number of factors and combinations and also is often related to psychological factors, social well-being is also part of the concept of health established by the WHO(1947) and a central component of individuals' overall health.¹⁶ Social well-being plays an "effective

¹⁶ Health is a state of complete physical, mental and *social* well-being and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity

role in improving the quality of life, social efficacy, and social performance” (Breslow L., 1972) and is, therefore, key to social integration.

In this context, social well-being depends a lot on the interpersonal relations established by the woman, and her close network, as well as with society in general. These relations are often difficult as the woman doesn't have access to many common spaces with the autochthonous population and her unique experience makes her reticent to establishing new relationships. Also, the aspects mentioned before (xenophobia, racism, etc.) hinder her will and capacity to establish social relations, leaving her isolated and at the margins.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding Social well-being and positive interpersonal relations

- One recommendation applicable to the field of social well-being refers to the participation of women in classes such as mother-child classes (although these ones are often not very attractive for women), sports classes, health workshops and excursions. These have benefits for the development of soft skills, socialization, generating a social network and feeling of having a place in society, which are not just beneficial for job insertion but for social inclusion in general. The NGO which recommended these activities mentions that VoHT participate in mixed classes with other women who are autochthonous (and, therefore, not victims), in order to break the tendency for victims only relating amongst themselves and perpetuating a state of victimization;
- Regarding sports classes, and specifically focusing on Nigerian VoHT, one of the Best practices validates by experience points out that “Preferred sport classes are usually Zumba or belly dance, while yoga or Pilates classes are many times associated with a foreign religion and are therefore rejected”;
- To help socialization and integration, gatherings for purposes not related to courses were also observed as being useful, such as meeting for presentations on issues which women feel motivated towards, meetings to share a meal, etc.
- A program specifically developed for Nigerian VoHT in Austria, focuses on classes on topics that both facilitate social integration and also motivate women, such as Health (sexual health, HIV/AIDS prevention, good nutrition, etc.), History & Politics (Austria and Europe, Nigeria, democracy, etc.), and Culture (developing a cultural sensitivity, different cultures in Europe, etc.).

8. Economic situation

The Economic situation of VoHT is a key aspect of social integration, as it affects some of the previous items mentioned, namely the access to housing and the fulfilment of basic needs. The difficulties of integration of VoHT or any other vulnerable population departing from economic scarcity are well known: having to prioritize immediate income to the necessary long term actions which facilitate integration constitutes an impediment to this integration. In the case of VoHT, and in addition to impoverishment, we must add two factors: on the one hand, the fact that victims are usually bound to an economic debt with their traffickers and others, which endangers their lives and is prioritized. On the other hand, even when this debt is paid, trafficking is often part of a migration process about which the victim's family has an economic expectation. This means that often the victim is more focused on economically supporting her family in immediate terms than investing in herself.

Economic stability and not having to be constantly concerned about economic issues will allow a woman to concentrate on her longer-term economic and psychosocial improvement.

Because the economic situation is very connected to the employability and to access of services and resources and these two aspects are also explored in these points, we will leave only some recommendations which complements these.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding the Economic Situation

- Respect the woman's priorities, and support the establishment of new ones, informing the woman of different consequences and risks;
- Support the woman in the development of a personal financial plan in case of need;
- Support the woman in finding a balance between her commitments to her family's finances and including themselves and their own priorities in their financial planning;
- Guide the woman in understanding the different economic aspects of the host country such as bank accounts, credit cards, payments, loans, money remittances and other useful transactions, according to her needs;
- Make use of all the services which can provide economic stability to the victim, being those NGOs, Public Social Services, etc.;

9. Physical well-being

VoHT, especially those TNC forced and/or coerced into prostitution, are particularly exposed to both physical and mental health risks, which result from their particular double condition of lack of access to normalized services and exposure to several forms of violence, to which the stigma associated with prostitution constitutes a third victimization.

The marginalization associated with trafficking and forced prostitution carries a subsequent vulnerability in terms of physical well-being due to continuous negligence, lack of access to services and limitation of movements.

Pre-existing health conditions, as well as health problems directly related to the trafficking process can also lead to social integration problems, as they may bring limitations in movements, chronic diseases which limit physical ability, etc.

The most commonly identified health issues addressed by the documents analysed were:

- Lack of control of sexual and reproductive rights and health (STDs; unwanted pregnancies and forced abortions, gynecological problems and infectious diseases, mainly);
- Substance abuse;
- Confinement and isolation;
- Long-lasting physical injuries such as scars, chronic pain, sleeping or eating problems and musculoskeletal injuries;
- Long periods of physical exhaustion during trafficking which lead to chronic fatigue;

Often, health is not a priority in women's lives for a long time as they are forced to prioritize economic issues and immediate survival measures, consulting with health services only in emergencies and with no focus on prevention. In addition, and depending on the cultures and traditions, health is only understood as the absence of disease and not in its preventive facet which has an impact on treatment adherence. In the specific case of Sub-Saharan victims, there is the common danger of self-medication, belief in the healing powers of mixtures of herbs, medicines and alcohol, also used to avoid pregnancies or to perform abortions. These are practices which can seriously endanger the lives and health of women and medical professionals should ensure they are aware of any complementary treatments that may interact with prescribed medications.

Health needs don't end when the trafficking process ends and it is actually common that some of the health issues developed along the process may become chronic, which demands that health assistance is assured throughout the whole process, without time limitations and unconditional - regardless of their immigration status.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding Physical wellbeing

- Sex education and family planning programs should be provided, which include basic concepts on anatomy and physiology;

- Health and sex education programs should adopt a transcultural approach to health, understanding the different meanings of health, disease and treatment methods, as well as the different ways in which distress may be expressed in different cultural backgrounds, the causes and explanations given by women to their health issues,
- Health information should also inform women about the access to the health system and the rights which assist VoHT and Asylum seekers when accessing these services;
- Creation or participation on a network for specialized health assistance specific for VoHT;
- In the direct relation with the VoHT, it is important to use language and concepts she will understand as often cultural barriers make it difficult for women to express their physical issues or they may be unable to describe their concerns and experiences.

10. Mental well-being

Mental well-being is fundamental for psychosocial functioning and the associated social integration. VoHT are particularly prone to mental health challenges due to the dreadful experiences and traumas many of them are exposed to at most every point along the life course. Women have often been exposed to poverty, violence, abuse, and deprivation in the country or origin, during the migratory process, and in the host country. The social integration process requires a minimal level of mental well-being which is further complicated due to a lack of preparation on the part of most mental health professionals to work with culturally diverse serially traumatized women.

Psychological support for the victim and the training itself oriented towards the job market in the rehabilitation phase has been identified as very relevant to the success of the reintegration process and to overcome the stigmatization to which victims, especially women, of sexual exploitation are subject. Also, reparation and compensation to the victim is an important support and facilitates the reintegration process, particularly in the case of assisted return. Similarly, entry into the labour market and social inclusion in the context of reintegration also have a positive impact on more prolonged and complex processes of psychological rehabilitation for the victim.

Cultural issues

It should be noted that the very notion of “mental illness” is particular to Western biomedicine in which there is a clear differentiation between the “mental” and the “somatic” (or physical), and suffering and distress are understood to be caused by natural (biopsychosocial) causes. In many cultures from which VoHT grew up, suffering and distress are understood to have supernatural causes and as such are best treated by local healers. This means that in some cultures, mental health interventions have negative, even dangerous connotations. To begin with, mental illness is stigmatized; being referred to a mental health professional can be seen as meaning that a person is “crazy”, and as such “psychiatry is associated with institutionalization” (IOM, 2007). In other cultures, since mental illness is connected with superstitious beliefs and/or religious punishments it is understood as not treatable except through specific cultural rituals. These facts help explain why many of the VoHT are so reluctant to search for counselling or even understand what it is. For some women “talk therapy” may appear to be strange and pointless as no connection is seen between discussing emotions and well-being given that collectivist cultures tend towards an “outer” and not psychological focus. That being said, psychological support, once understood, is seen by women as having benefits to improve self-confidence and manage emotional distress.

Risk factors

The combination of the multiplicity of traumatic life experiences, chronicity of these experiences and the constant subjugation to the power of abusers/traffickers/clients means that VoHT are a rather unique population and particularly vulnerable. To that end, the OIM (2007, pp.190-191) identifies the following forms of violence to which VoHT are exposed:

- Terrorized;
- Lied and deceived;
- Maintained in unpredictable and uncontrollable conditions;
- Eliminated of all decision-making power;
- Emotional manipulation;
- Put in “extreme survival conditions”;
- Long periods of physical exhaustion which lead to mental burnout

Victims of Human Trafficking are subject to psychological sequelae of the exploitation they’ve endured, that can include anxiety, depression, PTSD and Complex PTSD (Zimmerman, C. & Pocock, N., 2013). In addition, cognitive function is impacted and can be characterized by memory loss, blackouts, lack of concentration, difficulties to present a coherent narrative, negative coping behaviour.

In addition to the violence that VoHT are subject to, it is not uncommon that they have been exposed to long periods of poor living conditions which diminish access to spaces of promotion of wellbeing and the opportunity to practice different levels of self-care. Furthermore, self-care is rarely part of the person’s priorities due to low self-esteem, the need for survival, and indeed a collectivist notion of self that prioritizes duties to family.

Therapeutic challenges and the need for multifaceted specialization

The complex situation pertaining to the mental wellbeing of VoHTs means that they often present an array of behavioural and relational responses that do not conform to that *normal* mental health service user. These may include:

- Reactive behaviours and decisions that may not be understood by professionals, as it responds to the fears, traumas and ways of seeing the world that VoHT developed throughout their experience;
- Expression of hostility and aggressive speech, symptoms of the prolonged frustration associated with their limbo situation and their trauma and it is sometimes a challenge for the professional to not take these behaviours personally.

Best practices in Mental health interventions with VoHT: General perspectives

The combination of cultural differences, GBV, the ubiquity of trauma and all of the other risk factors and challenges identified means that there is a need for psychotherapy that is specialized in trauma, a specialization that isn’t always common or available in services assisting victims. It should also be culturally adapted, adopt a gender perspective with a human rights orientation, and attend to the complex therapeutic relationship.

Care must be taken to adapt the counselling process such that it can be effective given the particularities of VoHT. As has been discussed throughout this report, the effectiveness of the intervention starts with the development of a trusting relationship in a safe space and the strong recommendation from all the documents analysed is for a tailored approach.

Also, safety issues must be observed at all moments, assuring that neither the woman or the professional are at risk. The space where counselling takes place must assure the safety for all, with the possibility to be closed from the inside, different exits, a reception or security area, etc.

Best practices: Therapeutic relationship

- The development of a solid and trusting therapeutic relationship requires the certainty that the same professional will always be available for them and that no major changes will happen is also a key element referred by VoHT as a source of well-being.
- **Unbiased Communication:** the counsellor must assure not to jump into conclusions or making assumptions about the victim based on stereotypes or previous victims’ experiences. Each of the women has a personal history and a different lived experience. It is important to give protagonism to the victim and allow her to express her concerns first, helping her navigate different options and interpretations and

without conditioning or minimizing her narrative.

- **Understanding of power dynamics:** it is important to bear in mind that VoHT have been exposed to a situation where others had power and control over their lives- physical control, economic control, religious/superstitious control, etc. Counselling must not repeat patterns of control over the victim, even in subtle ways, allowing the victim to take decisions on her own, at her own pace and according to her possibilities, making her feel that she is the one in control of her destiny;
- **Understanding of the women not only as victims but as survivors:** underscoring their resilience, their capacity to make choices under her circumstances and to activate personal resources. This means to not underestimating women's capacities and giving value to their experiences, resignifying them.

Best practices: Therapeutic process

- **Information about the process:** Given that few women will have any understanding as to what to expect in counselling and/therapy. It is that crucial to explain at the outset what the process consists of, including informing women of their procedural rights, such as a right to an individual interview and confidentiality of the interview. Addressing expectations is a difficult but fundamental task. It has been reported that many women who endured trafficking, once receiving assistance, expect to find answers and solutions that are not feasible, either for legal and bureaucratic reasons or for other reasons that are beyond the control of the counsellor. It is, therefore, important, not to promise solutions and generate expectations that are not certain so not to frustrate women as outcomes of many of the processes (legal outcomes, job interviews, etc.) cannot be controlled. Relatedly, the therapeutic process must be given the time that is needed for the VoHT to process and talk about her experience as assistance cannot be pushed and change cannot be expected to happen very quickly;
- **Create an individual plan together:** without biased interpretations but exploring together different possibilities based on the professional's knowledge and the victim's will and expectations;
- Be patient in issues related to memory loss, either in relation to the trafficking experience as well as in daily issues: it is common that VoHT experience memory loss and lack of focus, which can have consequences in the management of everyday life;
- **Supervision:** Given the multiple complications in psychological attention to VoHT, supervision should be offered to professionals, providing emotional support and advising on care-tools; GBV, suffer from complex trauma, they are from a different culture, many are asylum seekers, which is itself traumatic. This demands a multifaceted response which requires considerable therapeutic agility.

Best practices: Therapeutic approach and content

- Given the centrality of culture as noted above, ethnocultural therapy is recommended;
- Counselling should have a Psychosocial approach and be carried out by a Multidisciplinary team; Given that the women's issues are not simply intrapsychic active engagement with all of the stakeholders in the social integration process is recommended, and in that respect all available resources for the victim should be activated;
- Specific psychological accompaniment should be provided when the VoHT are going through legal action against traffickers, as this is often a moment of revictimization which causes emotional stress;
- Women should be supported to tell their story of violence highlighting the issues that are relevant for the claim in the context (individual therapy; workshop) and at the rhythm that they are comfortable with.
- The mental health team should help her in the interpretation and resignification of her story, which is often not completely clear, and some details are forgotten or distorted. Reclaiming this narrative and turning it on a coherent story helps the victim to deal with what happened. The professional has to be able to reconstruct this story, showing a non-judgemental attitude and a supportive approach.
- **Limits of talk:** As noted above, for a variety of reasons standard talk therapy is not always productive and may be countertherapeutic. Spoken discourse is often hindered by idiom, shame, lack of familiarity

with or clarity on how to explain emotions, etc. It is advisable to use other methods of communication than not only spoken or written ones, which can also establish a deeper connection with emotions and with the counsellor. Using picture cards or art/Art therapy can be very useful and healing.

- **Limits of psychological tests:** Most of the psychological tests lack “cultural equivalence” and can only be used with VoHT if they are appropriately adapted or if were specifically developed for populations sharing the specific VoHT characteristics. Tests should only be applied by professionals with appropriate training to do so.

Non-individual therapy best practices for mental well-being

- Workshops for self-esteem and empowerment have been found to be effective;
- Information and promotion of self-care measures such as participating in social events and celebrations, using public libraries, etc.;
- Follow-up support after victims have left the programs is also seen as of importance in the continuation of the trust relationship;
- Attending to a stable development of a life plan can also constitute a healing process, even if not through specific psychological therapy

11. Access to services and opportunities and Promotion of rights

TCN women usually come from cultural backgrounds where certain services don't exist or are not free to access such as resource centres for women, programs to address gender-based violence etc. These are spaces which not only provide practical information but also facilitate socialization and social integration

One of the most evident signs of social integration is the full access to citizenship rights. Often, the years spent deprived from any sort of rights leads VoHT to lose self-worth and avoid accessing certain rights. Also, often, the TCN condition means that women are not aware of the rights they have, both as VoHT as well as citizens and women.

Also, most VoHT, when asked, referred to have serious difficulties navigating the public administration and the bureaucratic intricacies necessary to access certain rights. For example, women expressed the right to free food from Social Services but, not being able to fill in the correspondent request, giving up on further attempts to access these services.

According to some of the documents analysed, in the claim for rights there is also an important Gender component related to the fact that women from more traditional societies often don't assume to have certain rights like the right to information or to make certain decisions over their lives and just accept the authority.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding services and opportunities

- Provide practical information on local services women can attend such as women centres, Social Services, courses, etc.;
- If needed, assist the woman with paperwork and formalities needed to access certain rights;
- Develop short courses to explain the rights that assists VoHT, asylum seekers and women in general in the host country (for example, in Spain women who suffered GBV are entitled to protected employment options, to a government subsidy and to regularize their legal situation, amongst other rights);
- Provide a follow up of her access to rights at all moments of the process and as her situation may change. These rights go side by side with the victim's possibilities and choices and it is essential that she is informed.

12. Motivation and commitment to re/integration process

Motivation is strongly linked to mental health and social well-being, factors that are deeply affected by the experience of Trafficking. Amongst the consequences of this often-long experience is the tendency to depressive states and lack of motivation to entail a new phase of their lives. VoHT often experience low self-esteem and lack of impulse as they may not believe to be able to triumph. This may be a source of frustration both for the woman and for the professionals. Also, other factors for lack of motivation are perceived discrimination, language barriers, lack of social network, family longing, acculturative stress, bureaucratic mazes, amongst others.

These factors may obstruct or delay the integration process from both parts: it is possible that the woman becomes intermittent in social programs and activities for inclusion and it is also common that professionals lose motivation or understand women's intermittences as lack of interest, becoming less committed.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding motivation and commitment to re/integration process

- Motivational interviews and the use of motivational techniques in the line of those applied to victims of GBV;
- Gatherings for activities which are motivational for women and that they can understand as both useful and recreational;
- Activities which focus on migratory aspects, their country of origin, their culture and others that can connect at an emotional level;
- It has been suggested that the intervention of peer-workers- women who have been in a similar situation to that of the victim- works as a motivational relationship in which the woman can project herself in her desired future;
- Explore with the woman the aspects of the social intervention process which are more and less motivating for her, including her suggestions in the approach in order to assure a bigger commitment.

13. Legal issues and court proceedings

Legal issues often hinder VoHT integration, especially in the case of TCN. These issues can be of different types:

1. Asylum request process;
2. No legal documents to be in the host country;
3. Deportation orders in process;
4. Legal documents to live but not to work in the host country;
5. Legal documents about to expire;
6. Collaborating with the police in process of obtaining documents;
7. Denouncing traffickers and protected witnesses.

Although this report's aim is not to focus on the legal implications of Trafficking, it is relevant to mention how different legal status and court proceedings can mean different rights and opportunities, but also different motivations and priorities for women, which will, of course, influence her social integration. Situations of uncertainty like not having a legal status or being in the process of waiting for a legal status to be approved often causes anxiety and fear, making it very difficult for women to prioritize any other matter regarding social inclusion, since they still don't feel to be a part of the host country and their situation can change at any point.

Also in the case of points 6 and 7, being part of a judicial process implies a higher need for protection and safety, meaning women should be less exposed to interaction with other potential victims in NGO programs, for example, and are less willing to take part in social activities and socialization processes. It also means that women will possibly be less available timewise as these processes can be time consuming through several appointments in

unpredictable schedules. This also means that victims will be more fearful of the possible consequences of their legal action as, in many cases, they experience threats from traffickers and others involved.

Also, it is important to mention that having legal documents has also a symbolic meaning for migrants in general and especially women VoHT and/or asylum seekers. It represents the accomplishment of the migratory journey and an outcome which opens possibilities and opportunities for an improvement of life conditions. This is also why, often, a lot of expectation is put in obtaining legal documents, even if this doesn't necessarily lead to immediate inclusion.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding Legal issues and court proceedings

- Safety is always a priority. In the case of victims who are part of a police investigation (as victim/ accuser or witnesses) it is always necessary to take extra safety measures like making sure the victim doesn't have interaction with other potential victims and total confidentiality in all the network of assistance;
- Understand the anxiety and worry that the lack of legal documents implies for the victim and adapt the activities to her availability;
- Be realistic about the different suggestions for the victim so not to create or feed an expectation regarding the possibilities which will happen once the victim has legal documents. Instead, it is important to remind her of all that entails finding a job (vocational training, language, etc.);

14. Well-being of secondary beneficiaries

As mentioned before, it is common that women VoHT have children either with them or in the country of origin or have other family responsibilities and ties which last throughout the trafficking experience. It has been reported that the concern over their children's future and safety is a top concern for survivors and part of their will to migrate in the first place, in order to provide for a better life for their children or other members of the family, often prioritizing secondary beneficiaries' safety and well-being to their own. Often women's lives are very tight to their families in the country of origin and their decisions are aimed at satisfying family needs.

On the other hand, often younger VoHT opt to prioritize marriage and the creation of a family to other forms of social inclusion such as a job, as they find the country of destination a safe place to have a family project and at the same time that contributes to their social inclusion.

Best-practices and recommendations regarding the Well-being of secondary beneficiaries

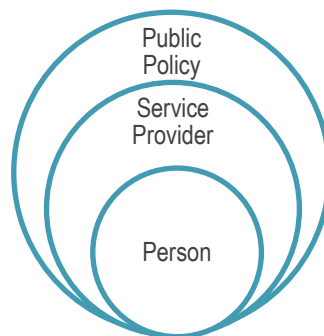
- Family mediation is mentioned in some of the documents analysed as an important part of the integration process (and re-integration in the country of origin, which we won't address). This is seen as a healing process which helps survivors to regain a new focus on their future projects and the measure in which their families are a part of it.
- From a systemic and holistic approach, the focus of intervention must be centred not only on the victim but also on her priorities in terms of family relations and people who matter to them. In the needs assessment it is important to open space for her to express her concerns regarding children or other family and incorporate their existence in the intervention strategy as much as possible, given the likely limitations (Distance, economic need, communication difficulties, etc).
- It is important to continue empowering women to be economically independent and develop social relevant skills in order to prevent the development of dangerous power dynamics and dependency. Some documents analysed report the cases of women who pass from a situation of Trafficking to a situation of dependency from a husband which doesn't give her economic autonomy and freedom to pursue her own goals;

5. Pitfalls to avoid, challenges and other aspects to have in mind

Introduction

This chapter explores some of the knots that were enunciated in the documents analysed and which constituted obstacles to the provision of services, barriers to integration and other challenges found through experience. Most of these obstacles already became evident throughout the report but will be better systematized along this chapter.

These obstacles and barriers can be understood at different levels: at the level of the person, at the level of the service provider and at the level of public policy.



5.1 General obstacles found

- **Security and control issues:**

This issue was already explored in previous chapters, but it is important to point it out again as a strong obstacle for social integration. Trafficked women are controlled to a greater or lesser extent by the criminal network involved in their process, be it physical control and constant presence or be it a control of the phone. This control can also involve blackmail, coercion and other forms of control.

In the case of women who are still closely related to the network or to specific people involved in their trafficking story, the control relationship can also pose a danger to the professionals involved and for other women who are part of the project.

Another security and control issue is that some VoHT may still be bound by a monetary debt to their traffickers and/or families, which not only constitutes a security impediment but also a barrier to the possibility of the victim being able to undergo a personal process.

All of the above lead to intermittences or very low participation in social programs for integration, as the fear for one's own safety leads to a minimal exposure.

- **Psychological support:**

There are difficulties in providing psychological support to victims of human trafficking, as pointed out in the section regarding mental well-being. Here we synthesize these main difficulties:

- Victims don't identify the existence of trauma or distress;
- Stigma associated with psychological support in different cultural backgrounds;
- Women are not familiar with the role of psychologists
- Distrust of other people as a consequence of the trafficking trauma;
- Avoidance to address stressful events as a strategy to overcome them
- Difficulties accessing services such as long waiting lists and high costs.

- **Language training:**

Language training is understood by all good practices and recommendations analysed as a mandatory tool for integration and reducing isolation, and necessary for claiming rights and facilitating the socialization process. In some cases, and for practical reasons, language training was similar for all women and differentiated between women with a low educational background (can't read or write at an advanced level in her mother tongue) and women with good language skills in their mother tongue. It is important to avoid creating groups for language classes with very different language skills as this may generate unbalanced classes which do not benefit either of the groups.

- **Multicultural environment:**

Some of the best practices analysed mention the difficulties of working with a multicultural group of women, due to different understandings of core concepts, existence of prejudices, different levels of language, etc. There were no specific suggestions for action regarding this difficulty.

5.2 At the level of the service user: Challenges and obstacles for Social Inclusion

Due to all of the above-mentioned consequences of Trafficking and the multi-layered set of constraints, women experience the following difficulties for social integration:

- Language barriers;
- Emotional distress and psychological sequelae of traumatic experiences (Lack of confidence, depression, anxiety, psychosis, PTSD or CT¹⁷);
- Lack of knowledge about the labour market;
- Cultural differences and barriers, as well as stereotypes, which can result in difficult communication and setting of goals;
- Legal situation;
- Economic need for families;
- Basic education,
- Lack of knowledge of the labour market (as foreigners in extreme marginalization and exclusion have no access to information on jobs, salaries, contracts, legislation, etc.);
- Lack of motivation and commitment to integration, for whatever personal, family or social reasons, which should be addressed in an individualized way, at the risk of making integration impossible;
- Lack of enough maturity or a low level of personal development, integration processes are more successful as VoHT are older and more mature;
- Fear of retaliation against their families, resulting in anxiety, feelings of guilt and difficulties to focus and to engage in a personal process;
- Fear of being judged;
- Limited access to basic needs, such as safe housing or health care¹⁸, due to irregular legal status, country limitations to services for immigrants, bureaucratic barriers, and long waiting lists.
- Lack of childcare facilities for women attending services

¹⁷ Complex Trauma has been reported as one of the psychological consequences of Trafficking (Zimmerman, C. & Pocock, N., 2013).

¹⁸ Practically all Best Practices analysed mention bureaucratic barriers to the social insertion of VoHT

5.3 At the level of the service provider: Challenges and obstacles for social inclusion

The service provider, being an NGO, Municipal service or other form of assistance, has a key role in accompanying survivors of Trafficking in social integration, reason why they are also exposed to specific challenges, that the documents analysed identified as:

- **Gaps and issues in the provision of services** such as short-term accompaniment, intermittence of the service, change of professionals, breaking the bond of trust, amongst others. It is mentioned by VoHT the importance of always knowing that there is always a professional available for them.
- **Discontinuation of services once projects are over or funding ends:** This aspect has a strong negative impact on victims who usually have a hard time trusting professionals, so it is advisable to guarantee stability and continuity of support, with minimal change in professionals possible;
- **Lack of specific focus on women with particular characteristics:** Attention must be paid to those women in particular personal situations that makes them especially vulnerable such as being in an irregular administrative situation, pregnancy, health issues, disability, women with active drug or alcohol use, transgender women, and others. In these particular situations, it is especially important to ensure that they are provided with comprehensive protection and assistance that avoids secondary victimization. This is also understood to be related to public policy issues regarding the decisions to focus the programs on specific collectives and ignore or assume the inclusion of others;
- **The inescapable spiral of feminized jobs:** Most best practices that were based on experience and included job placement identified that the most common jobs offered to women VoHT were still the most feminized ones such as cleaning. This is due to the fact that their experiences are not officially recognized in the job market, they usually don't have certificates to demonstrate previous studies or working experience and the language barriers prevent them from reaching jobs in more complex positions for they demand higher level skills and cleaning training and jobs are still the simplest ones and that can guarantee a shorter time investment in exchange for a faster insertion;
- **A focus on agency:** Some documents call out to attention the fact that there is still a tendency to 'infantilize program beneficiaries and potentially rob them of their agency and ability to dissent and negotiate within the program framework' (Brunovskis and Surtees, 2008, p.72), which makes it essential to incorporate an empowerment approach that is not only a theoretical frame but it should also translate into actions and interventions. One of the common pitfalls is the definition of an Empowerment approach in the programme but a lack of transposition of this frame to concrete measures.

5.4 At the Public Policy level: Challenges and obstacles for social integration

Public Policy can benefit or hinder the survivor's process of social integration as it poses limitations or offers protective elements, sometimes simultaneously. Some of the difficulties survivor's of Trafficking experience at the level of public policy are:

- **Legal aspects such as:**
 - Time it takes for women to receive their working permits or asylum status;
 - In the case of VoHT who reported their traffickers to the authorities and are involved in a legal process under witness protection program, the time this process takes leaves women in a limbo, not being able to access a job either due to being a protected witness or due to delays in receiving resident and/or working permit;

- **Inequality across regions in the same country:** Some reports have found that a victim's fate varies with the region or city where she accesses the circuit for social integration. Regional disparities were observed between countryside and cities, for example, or between cities which have or don't have public services dedicated to VoHT.

5.5 Other aspects to keep in mind

Unexplored issues and limitations

Understanding that NGO's usually form a bridge between the person and the public policy, having more or less influence on the latest, all of these levels were considered in the present report.

Some of the focuses of this research could not be found in the best practices collected and would have been interesting to be explored, such as:

- Little attention was given in the majority of best practices to the particular situation of victims with children and to the children's' social integration;
- Little attention was given to specific therapeutic practices to increase the victim's wellbeing and recuperation. Beyond a more generic counselling and regular accompaniment, no innovative culturally adapted interventions were delineated;¹⁹
- Activities with an empowerment background were not exemplified in concrete terms, leaving it to each professional to apply this notion freely - but not led by example.
- Occasionally, in some of the documents analysed, the presence of cultural mediators was suggested to facilitate the communication with the women. Nevertheless, no consensus was evident from the documents analysed as to confidentiality issues, safety, cultural differences in the same nationality, dangers to communication and professional relationship, amongst other concerns. For this reason, recommendations about mediators were not included in this report.
- Funding was often understood as insufficient to both finance projects and sponsor women's training and time dedicated to personal and social processes. This is mainly a policy and advocacy issue that doesn't necessarily relate directly with the work developed by social intervention teams but definitely affects it. These policy and advocacy issues were omitted from this report but are also important to keep in mind.
- While it was always kept into account that VoHT could also be Asylum Seekers, there weren't major differences in intervention stated by the documents analysed in what concerns the definition of the integration process, except in what regards the legal status of the women assisted. This doesn't mean that there aren't other specificities which differentiate the assistance project but they were not evident in the documents analysed and no comparison was established. It would be interesting to establish these differences in a more systematized way.
- Not documents analysed referred to women VoHT in general, although some specified that objectives of Trafficking were sexual exploitation. This generalised view originated some ambiguity in terms of the assistance needed for the victims according to the means of exploitation.

¹⁹ This doesn't mean that these recommendations and best-practices are not collected in more specific documents or that they are not being developed by other projects, but in the 20 Best-Practices analysed plus the 15 extra practices that passed a first filter these were not present.

Conclusions

Throughout this document we explored the main results and conclusions from 20 documents which included Recommendations, Best-practices and Models of social integration of Victims of Human Trafficking, especially with means of sexual exploitation and women asylum seekers who endured some form of violence.

It became clear throughout this analysis that most documents build strong theoretical conclusions from practice which are usually in accordance with each other, which provides a sense of coherence between the different experiences being developed throughout Europe. Besides some particular differences related to the nature of the document analysed or country/regions specificities, there is a consensus on the main issues addressed, namely regarding:

- understandings around the meaning of integration;
- victim-centered approach and tailored itineraries;
- personalized needs-assessment;
- continuous risk-evaluation;
- centrality of psychosocial services for social integration;
- multi-layered approach needed to tackle complex personal and social situations;
- The role of coordinated approaches and establishment of networks of support amongst professionals, NGO's, public services and private sector (employers mainly);
- need to adopt an empowerment perspective;
- vocational training and integration courses;
- centrality of language development skills for autonomy;
- addressing mental health sequels and incorporating a flexible approach;
- facilitation of access to services and citizenship rights;

Given the relevance to tailored approaches, it also became evident that there are no rigid formulas for social integration, especially in the case of such a complex population and with so many uncontrollable external factors. The elements which interact towards the goal of social integration touch all vital spheres and, therefore, are interconnected in a tight system which demands a comprehensive approach.

Finally, it also became clear through the document analysis that there is a close relation between public policy and social integration of VoHT. Most documents analysed and many of the ones excluded from the analysis revealed the need to develop further social policies regarding immigration, assistance and employability which could have a strong impact on the vulnerable situation of this population.

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Cope & Hope

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