



TOLERANT
Support Victims of Human Trafficking

TOLERANT: Transnational network for Employment integration of women victims of trafficking

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TOLERANT is a transnational network aiming to support the regular exchange of good practices, experiences and information related to ground work for integrating women victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (VoT) in employment and for promoting their economic empowerment.

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On the 10th of December, LEFOE together with its project partners organised the Final Conference of the **Tolerant project** in order to present project's main findings and foster international dialogue about social and labour integration of vulnerable migrants, especially trafficked persons. Within this Conference framework, special attention was given to the links between trafficking and labour, also discussing migration and gender related issues in the broader context of the recent health crisis.

The Conference represented also the right occasion for presenting the results achieved so far concerning the labour integration services carried out by TOLERANT partners in each partner country. As emerged from the panel discussion, we have been forced by the health crisis generated by the Coronavirus to adjust our service provision and thus to offer new concrete solutions for supporting vulnerable women under those circumstances. Although employability remains a constant issue, the Tolerant team managed to support VoT developing fundamental skills to enter the labour market in their respective country of stay.

Four thematic workshops were delivered over the course of the full-day event, giving way to positive and constructive debates over the following topics:

- How to strengthen transnational cooperation and exchange on the topic of labour market integration for VoT?
- The struggles behind 24/7 care work. Who cares?
- How to support undocumented workers?
- Supporting trafficked persons accessing the labour market during the pandemic and beyond (focus on Austria, hosting country of the online conference)



PROJECT PARTNERS



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Following the fruitful panel discussion as well as the four workshops that were held in the frame of the conference, project partners elaborated a series of policy recommendations reflecting the main outcomes of the transnational debate between experts, stakeholders and professionals. Having drawn a multifold perspective on the topic of the access to the labour market for Trafficked persons, the following recommendations show the remaining efforts that still need to be made.

► To State Authorities

General Recommendations/Integration/Gender mainstreaming

- Properly address all the economic, social, cultural and political factors that continue to relegate women and girls in subordinated and marginal positions.
 - Pay immediate attention to the assistance and protection of women victims of trafficking, who, in light of the current Covid-19 outbreak and huge global economic fallout, risk further exposure to isolation, exclusion, disempowerment, multiple discriminations, stigmatisation and re-trafficking.
 - Design and implement a holistic integration policy at central level while acknowledging the gender specific vulnerabilities that many migrants, including women victims of trafficking, face.
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Coordination among stakeholders

- Ensure the engagement of all stakeholders involved as well as the effectiveness of the coordination mechanisms in place.
 - Strengthen multi-agency involvement in the assessment of the personal situation and the vulnerability of victims of trafficking and establish good communication between competent authorities and specialised organisations/institutions working with Trafficked Persons, from a multidisciplinary approach.
 - Build more European solidarity and strengthen a cooperative approach between EU member states in assisting those in need.
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Access to services/documents/rights

- Address and eliminate structural and systemic barriers that limit women's and girl's autonomy and access to key resources, including adequate and protected accommodation, healthcare that includes psychological and physical wellbeing, legal aid, education, childcare, employment opportunities etc.
- Acknowledge, that in order to achieve the desired outcome of migrants' integration, their basic needs must be covered as a basis on which to build all further efforts.
- Extend all protection and assistance measures for all victims of trafficking, including work permits and access to services, to ensure continuity in their social inclusion process beyond the current health crisis.

Access to asylum

- Ensure that Trafficked Persons have fair and effective access to asylum procedures and that both victim protection standards and asylum procedural guarantees are systematically applied.
 - Take measures to ensure an adequate duration of the asylum procedures to avoid limbo conditions. Very long durations of the asylum processes leave women with elevated fears about their future and great frustration and prevents them from accessing fundamental services such as civil registration, healthcare services for their minor children, professional training courses and labour integration etc.
 - Strive and ensure that the survivors' rights to non-discrimination and non-refoulement, including detention in repatriation centres, deportation, and stigmatisation are respected and protected.
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Accommodation

- Provide more accommodation spaces in order to avoid precarious living conditions for all asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. Accommodation centres should guarantee a safe and gender violence-free environment for women. They should not be overcrowded and grant women access to gender-specific medical, psychological and legal assistance. Accommodation centres should not be remotely located and they should avoid institutionalization, isolation and ghettoization of the survivors. Public authorities should implement actions that ensure appropriate timing for survivors to reach independency and integration. As aforementioned, Trafficked Women repeatedly reported being trapped in the accommodation system for 3-4 years, without access to fundamental rights and services, which ensure their full integration and
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Education/Training Opportunities

- Ensure access to training opportunities even for people with asylum pending documents. The duration of courses with qualifications should be adjusted according to the duration of women's projects in both protected programmes and first and second-line facilities.
 - Promote the attendance of all refugees and asylum seekers in language courses from the beginning.
 - Enhance State recognition of language skills and other certificates that refugees might possess.
 - Engage the academic community (universities) and training agencies in the anti-trafficking response by persuading them to provide education opportunities which will be really accessible and suitable for people with low education attainment profiles (e.g. basic language skills)
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Exploitation/Labour Rights/ Access to labour market

- Enhance monitoring mechanisms to provide a safety net against exploitation (e.g. labour, sexual etc.) especially for undocumented VoT who are afraid to report their exploitation due to fear of deportation.
- Continue to carry out targeted inspections of working conditions in sectors at high risk of labour exploitation and unsafe working conditions in the context of the pandemic, ensuring that all workers are supported in accessing information and protective measures, support and redress and face no risk of immigration enforcement.
- Recognize the contribution of migrant workers to support European economies and fill labour shortages.

► To actors implementing interventions

General/ Trafficking-specific

- Ensure the participatory planning process of all interventions designed and implemented, improve consultation procedures and feedback mechanisms from the refugee/migrant communities.
 - Carefully take into account and address the impact of trafficking and exploitation both from a mental and physical health and victims' well-being aspect.
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Gender mainstreaming/Gender-specific

- Design and activate structured interventions of empowerment and social integration addressing in a gender sensitive manner important difficulties that women VoT face such as gender specific trauma, physical and health conditions related to the violence and sexual exploitation suffered in origin, transit and destination countries, in addition to language barriers, residency issues, access to justice, legal assistance and healthcare, support of a social network, demonstration of previous work skills, discrimination and stigma, stable housing.
 - Adopt a gender sensitive and empowerment approach and human rights approach, which help the important process of establishing trust relationships with women, the disclosure of their stories and most importantly allow women to speak up and become agents of change. The labour market integration for Trafficked persons should entail a holistic approach, which takes into consideration many different aspects of women's' and girls' lives such as safety, protection, trauma, secondary victimization, accommodation, legal aid, childcare, residency documents etc.
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Access to services/rights/protection

- Provide highly secured and confidential services to women victims of trafficking.
- Put at the centre the best interests of the trafficked person and ensure that the person is referred to the most appropriate channel of protection to secure his/her rights and access a durable solution (be it in international protection or permanent residence in the country of destination or return and reintegration in the country of origin).
- Provide online support to victims of trafficking inside and outside shelters. Psychological counselling, legal support as well as educational and training activities are examples of the services, which might be temporarily provided remotely to ensure the continuity of victim's support and to prevent re-trafficking.

Education/Training Opportunities/ Access the labour market

- Design education programmes that are tailor made for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in order to enhance their employability. Register their skills and competencies in order to be matched with market needs.
 - Establish apprenticeship schemes for migrants and refugees in collaboration with the private sector and respective government bodies.
 - Properly address Trafficked Persons' needs with regards to formal education and assist them enrolling in public schools with the scope of obtaining diplomas and attending professional training courses.
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Collaboration among stakeholders/ Exchange of knowledge

- Build more European solidarity and strengthen a cooperative approach between EU Civil Society Actors in assisting those in need.
 - Take advantages of practices developed for VoT, which could be easily implemented for migrant women victims/survivors of GBV or at risk.
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► To Donors

General/COVID-19 related

- Pay immediate attention to the assistance and protection of Trafficked Women, who, in light of the current Covid-19 outbreak and huge global economic fallout, risk further exposure to isolation, exclusion, disempowerment, multiple discriminations, stigmatisation and re-trafficking.
 - Increase the evaluation mechanisms for projects implemented as well as the accountability mechanisms for all stakeholders involved.
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Gender mainstreaming/Gender-specific

- Request funded interventions to adopt a gender-sensitive approach and evaluate proposals with a strong element of gender analysis positively.
 - Fund emergency shelter for survivors of GBV including Victims of Trafficking.
 - Allocate funds for raising awareness on the topic of trafficking to fight stigma and discrimination.
 - Continue funding rehabilitation interventions as the risk of 'losing' those survivors who are already in transition is now particularly high due to the adverse economic situation.
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Access to services/rights

- Fund education programmes that are tailor made for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in order to enhance their employability. Register their skills and competencies in order to be matched with market needs.
- Fund interventions including free legal aid to undocumented migrants including potential Trafficked Persons.