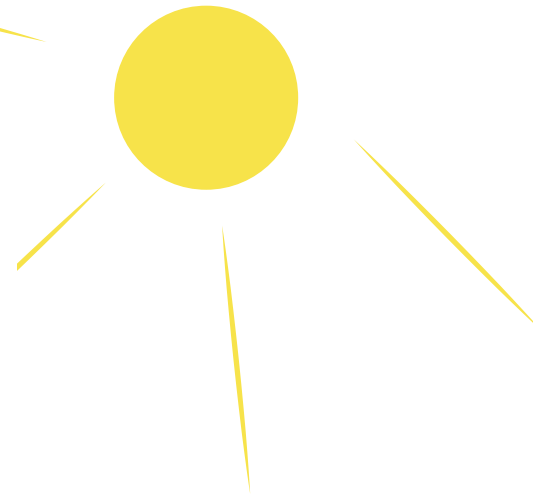


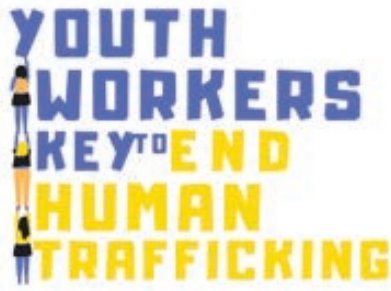


Erasmus+



**YOUTH  
WORKERS  
KEY TO END  
HUMAN  
TRAFFICKING**





Lead Partner



Cross Culture International Foundation



European Union Programs Agency



CESIE



Reaching Out Romania



Open Gate La Strada North Macedonia

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contact CESIE on [info@cesie.org](mailto:info@cesie.org)  
And for general project information  
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# **YU WOK 2 EN HT**

## **YOUTH WORKERS KEY TO END HUMAN TRAFFICKING**

2019-3-MT01-KA205-074058

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**IO1**

**RESEARCH REPORT**

**on youth worker victim identification**

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***Date: August 2020***

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## Introduction

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This document is the result of the implementation of IO1 of the project YU WOK 2 END HT (*Youth Workers Key To End Human Trafficking*) - Erasmus + KA2, Strategic Partnership for youth – Cooperation for innovation and the exchange of good practices. The objectives of the project are the improvement of skills of youth workers on the prevention, identification and support of young potential victims of human trafficking, the empowerment of young people against human trafficking by equipping youth workers on the topic, and sharing best practices on the prevention and identification of young potential victims of human trafficking.

The research aims to provide a first general knowledge about human trafficking, its methods of advancing and exploitation and the different practices for emergence, identification and support for victims. All this information has been collected for the development of accurate and focused information to support youth workers to prevent human trafficking among youths with valid tools to address the need area, spread awareness and best practices.

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This report is part of the transnational research among 4 partner countries of the project: CESIE from Italy, CCIF from Malta, Open Gate La Strada from North Macedonia and Reaching out from Romania. It is a basis for the partnership to come up with efficient, effective and innovative new tools or an out of the box and creative improvement to the already existing items.

It first addresses partner countries' national contexts in terms of human trafficking, the levels of awareness of youth, youth workers and stakeholders in relation to the topic, risk factors of becoming a victim of human trafficking and the key role of youth workers in ending the phenomenon. A needs analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of youth workers and/or stakeholders to do a more efficient work against human trafficking will be presented together with an account of the areas of improvement necessary to help potential victims or ex-victims. Lastly, a section dedicated to best practices from all partner countries will be presented.

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## Methodology & Ethical Considerations

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### Methodology

Data collection was conducted from April to July 2020 through a mixed methods methodology which included an initial Literature Review and a Field Research.

**Literature Review** was based on *secondary data*: articles, academic papers, publications, case studies, previous projects as its collection supposes a holistic reception of a wide variety of sources of information from different disciplines (Thin 2014).

**Field research** was based on *primary data*: based on qualitative research, partners conducted a series of formal semi-structured interviews done by phone/video call with young people and youth workers/stakeholders and public consultations with youth workers and stakeholders. Primary data was chosen as it allows to understand the nature of the phenomenon and to interpret the meaning given to human trafficking by interviewees from an inductive perspective (Sharan 2009).

Field research was thus conducted as follows:

- 122 semi-structured interviews with young people from local and migrant backgrounds, at least 30 in each partner country
- 43 semi-structured interviews with youth workers and/or stakeholders, at least 10 in each partner country
- 8 public consultations to gather information about predominant opinions and concerns regarding youth work and the issue of human trafficking with youth workers and/or stakeholders, 2 in each partner country with different number of participants.

Specifically, each partner country conducted the field research with the following number of participants:



Semi-structured interviews with Young People	Total	Female	Male
<b>Italy</b>			
<i>Local</i>	15	8	6
<i>Migrant</i>	15	7	9
<i>Total</i>	<b>30</b>	15	15
<b>Malta</b>			
<i>Local</i>	3	3	0
<i>Migrant</i>	27	10	17
<i>Total</i>	<b>30</b>	13	17
<b>North Macedonia</b>			
<i>Local</i>	25	20	5
<i>Migrant</i>	5	3	2
<i>Total</i>	<b>30</b>	23	7
<b>Romania</b>			
<i>Local</i>	32	10	22
<i>Migrant</i>	0	0	0
<i>Total</i>	<b>32</b>	10	22
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>122</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>61</b>

Table 1: Number of participants semi-structured interviews with young people by country



<b>Youth workers/Stakeholders</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>Female</b>	<b>Male</b>
<b>Italy</b>			
<i>Semi-structured interviews</i>	<b>11</b>	10	1
<i>Public consultations (X2)</i>	<b>9</b>	8	1
<b>Malta</b>			
<i>Semi-structured interviews</i>	<b>10</b>	7	3
<i>Public consultations (X2)</i>	<b>12</b>	6	6
<b>North Macedonia</b>			
<i>Semi-structured interviews</i>	<b>11</b>	10	1
<i>Public consultations (X2)</i>	<b>9</b>	8	1
<b>Romania</b>			
<i>Semi-structured interviews</i>	<b>11</b>	10	1
<i>Public consultations (X2)</i>	<b>6</b>	6	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>14</b>

Table 2: Number of youth workers / stakeholders who took part in field research by country

The whole process was given a necessary digital footprint because of the health emergency COVID-19; in that context, public consultations and previously arranged in-person semi-structured interviews were conducted remotely and all the partners have taken all measures to maintain the validity and robustness of our work through self-declaration online documents, verbal consent and online and telephone communications.





## Ethical Considerations

Given the nature of the phenomenon under study, ethics have been central to this research. Guidelines have included details on the environment under which to undertake the semi-structured interviews/consultations, informed consent, the people present in the interview/consultation, recording, language and role of the moderator.

Specifically, as far as **informed consent** is concerned, all participants were issued with a participant information statement and gave their consent before taking part in the study both by signing the consent form or verbally in those cases where signature or completion of an online form was not possible due to Covid-19 restrictions. CCIF, the Malta partner, conducted the interviews via phone or in-person with two staff members, where one person was interviewing, and the second person recorded the responses in a securely stored document on CCIF Malta's Google Drive; a Circular Letter from the NGO Open Gate La Strada office in Skopje, North Macedonia partner, was sent to the potential participants to present the project and invite them; CESIE, Italy's partner, asked participants to give a self-declaration in an online consent form before conducting semi-structured interviews and public consultations.

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**Participant selection** was done ensuring gender balance and taking also into account their background (local or migrant) and gender and will to participate in this research in order to get better insight on the human trafficking issue. Lastly, as already stated, due to Covid-19 emergency, interviews and public consultations had to be **adapted online**, either via video call or phone call. Partners however, were mindful to be respectful of interviewees, always used an informal but precise **language** (sometimes skipping to English to help the interviewee fully understand the meaning of the question) and were careful of the tone of voice, to make the interviewee feel comfortable, not persisting and respecting some silences or will of not answering to some personal questions, letting them arguing and interpreting about some aspects of the questions. In short, building and encouraging an exchange of views relationship and raising curiosity on the topic.



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## National context in terms of human trafficking

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### Italy

In Italy, according to the Ministry of the Interior, human trafficking constitutes the third source of income for criminal organizations, after arms and drugs trafficking. At local level, Sicily is a region deeply marked by migratory flows which has, in recent years, witnessed a dizzying increase in the number of women and young adolescents from African continent, in particular from Nigeria, considered by the IOM for at least **80% likely victims of human trafficking intended for sexual exploitation**, in Italy or in other European Union countries. (IOM 2017) At the same time, there is little if no reliable sources regarding the situation in the city of Palermo (*Public Consultation, 8th of May 2020*).

As far as the local context is concerned, information around the number of women exploited in Palermo is not clear and very volatile. Local rumours say it to be around 500, however, no reliable sources can confirm it. Current workings of the trafficking situation in Palermo keeps being characterized of women still exploited in private houses / apartments (s.c. *connection house*), mainly located in the city centre and surrounding areas, used as secret brothel. Despite the fact that each local association offer assistance, each in its own way, from food aid, payment of bills avoiding house evictions, the problems present today are the same as they were; in fact, victims have even become more vulnerable during the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdown. To the date, victims continue to find it difficult to find work or serious training opportunities.

In 2012, the anti-trafficking coordination **Favor and Loveth** was created, engaged in the fight against the sexual exploitation of women victims of human trafficking and in raising awareness on the topic at local level. They worked alongside the Municipality of Palermo to set up a technical roundtable in 2018 with other local organizations working in the field, for instance, Casa dei Giovani, Pilgrim of the earth, Caritas, Women of Benin City and CISS (South International Cooperation Fund). However, very little concrete progress has been accomplished so far as stakeholders work in isolation and no

coordinated mechanism has yet been successfully set in motion.

In Italy, it is **The Department for Equal Opportunities (DPO) of the Council Presidency** that covers various activities aimed to monitor, study, and analyse the phenomenon of human trafficking. The data collection system named **SIRIT<sup>1</sup>** is supported by institutional holders as DPO and project implementing entities working in the aforementioned field. For those victims who arrive in Italy, the key instruments to support and assist victims are various government's projects according to article 13 of law n.228 of 2003 "*Establishment of a special assistance program for the victims of the crimes foreseen by articles 600 and 601 of the penal code*" and article 18 of law n.286 of 1998 "*The staying for reasons of social protection*", which are coordinated and co-financed by DPO. According to these articles, the so-called "**double track**" can be implemented, which means that the residence permit can be issued not only after the victim's report but also in those cases where the latter cannot or do not want to report the case or to contact the Judicial Authority.

Crossing the border incorporated by Sicily does not imply the end of the journey. The presence of European borders controls has imposed mobility marked by invisibility; it usually happens they try to blend in long journeys on buses, trucks or other makeshift vehicles. In Northern Italy the crossing major hubs are in **Ventimiglia, Bardonecchia, Como and Brennero**. (Save The Children 2018)

The phenomenon in Italy is expressly punished in our legal system by the law n. 228 of 2003 "*Measures against human trafficking*" with which the articles of the penal code already relating to the reduction into slavery were rewritten (article 601 on human trafficking). The definition of conduct punishable by way of human trafficking was then expanded by legislative decree n. 24 of 2014 "*Implementation of Directive 2011/36/EU, relating to the prevention and repression of trafficking in human beings and the protection of victims*".

A relevant point on the legislative field is the **Security Decree - already converted into law n. 132 of 2018** – that abolishes one of the three types of protection that can be recognized to those who arrived in Italy to seek asylum, or humanitarian protection. It introduces a specific type of hypothesis of "special cases", which includes victims of human trafficking victims. Another form of restriction on the reception front was declared in March 2020 with an inter-

<sup>1</sup> (Computerized System for the collection of information on the human trafficking)

ministerial decree that in its art.1 stated that : *“For the entire duration of the national health emergency resulting from the spread of the COVID 19 virus, the Italian ports do not guarantee the necessary requirements for the classification and definition of “place of safety”, by virtue of the provisions of the Hamburg Convention, on search and maritime rescue, for rescue cases carried out by naval units flying a foreign flag outside the Italian SAR area”*. (Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, Ministry of Interior and Ministry of Health)

To help the initial disclosure a **free government’s hotline** was created. The “Green number” (800-290-290) is in operation 24/7 and respects anonymity of caller and is operated by multilingual staff. It provides detailed information on legislation and services guaranteed to people trafficked/exploited in Italy. The service is also addressed to citizens wishing to report situations of exploitation, as well as to the organizations.

### Malta

In recent years, Malta has made significant progress in certain areas in its anti-trafficking action. This includes social work support for human trafficking victims, lifting of residence permit and work permit fees for foreign victims, and more active prosecution of offenders overall. For the first time, a minor victim of trafficking was officially identified and received the necessary support (US Department of State, 2019). Moreover, in its response to the evaluation by the Council of Europe’s Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (“GRETA”), the government of Malta informed that free legal aid was made available for victims irrespective of their immigration status or type of exploitation. Victims also have access to free interpretation services (Council of Europe, 2020). Moreover, the government expanded its public awareness efforts (US Department of State, 2020).

At the same time, according to the 2020 TIP (Trafficking in Persons Report) Report of the US Department of State’s Office to Monitor and Combat Trafficking, there were insufficiencies in Malta’s anti-trafficking action compared to the past reporting period. It states that the Maltese government decreased both investigations and prosecutions, identified and referred fewer victims, demonstrated poor interagency coordination, and failed to adequately enforce labour recruitment regulations and control massage parlours where vulnerability to trafficking remains high. To give an illustration, between 2016 and 2019, the police identified only 7 cases of labour exploitation and 2

cases of sexual exploitation with the total number of 71 victims (Council of Europe, 2020). In this study, interview data and consultative meetings revealed that the number of potential trafficking victims might be much higher. Several respondents reported their encounters with potential victims among youth.

As many of them arrive in Malta undocumented and unskilled, they can hardly access the labour market and secure employment unless granted the protection status. Between 2005 and 2015, **only 4 per cent of asylum applicants received refugee status, and 34 per cent were under subsidiary protection** (UNHCR, 2018). In contrast to recognized refugees, subsidiary protection holders do not receive employment benefits such as employment insurance and pension, even though they must pay tax on wages (UNHCR Malta, 2020). Several NGO workers who participated in the public consultations noted that many young migrants end up in informal and often illegal labour. For instance, one of the interviewees from the Gambia reported that he works casual jobs and avoids police as he does not have a work permit (Interview on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2020).

### North Macedonia

In North Macedonia, trafficking in human beings is defined as a separate criminal offence in the Criminal Code<sup>2</sup> as of 2002. The Criminal Code includes a definition of human trafficking pursuant to the Palermo Protocol (Article 3). Articles 418 to 418-e of the Macedonian Criminal Code prohibit various criminal behaviours with elements of trafficking in human beings. The definitions of THB offences in the Criminal Code recognise *“all means of human trafficking related crimes in line with international standards, as well as all forms of exploitation”*<sup>3</sup>.

According to the Annual Reports of the National Commission for Combating Human Trafficking and Illegal Migration of North Macedonia provided data on identified victims, in the period between 2015-

<sup>2</sup> Criminal Code (Official Gazette, Nos.37/96, 80/99, 4/2002, 43/2003, 19/2004, 81/2005, 60/2006, 73/2006, 7/2008, 139/2008, 114/2009, 51/11, 135/11, 185/11, 142/12, 166/12, 55/13, 82/13, 14/14, 27/14, 28/14, 115/14, 132/14, 160/14, 199/14, 196/15, 226/15, 97/17, 248/18)

<sup>3</sup> Todorovska, M., Varoslija, M., Frishcik, J., Gelevska, M., Mishev, S. (2016). “Monitoring and Evaluation of Anti-Trafficking Laws and Policies and Their Implementation in the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia In 2014 And 2015” Skopje: Open Gate-La Strada.p.12. Retrieved from the Open Gate website: <http://www.lastrada.org.mk/mainarchive/monitoring%20report%20MAK-ENG.pdf> (accessed on 15 April 2020)

2019 they collected a total of 21 cases of victims of human trafficking having Macedonian nationality (15 of these are girls) and 3 cases of foreign ones.

During 2019, the institutions identified 6 victims of human trafficking, of which 4 children/female, 3 nationalities of RNM, 3 are foreign victims, of which two from Kosovo and 1 from BiH.<sup>4</sup>

Further, the reports states that citizens of North Macedonia along with the foreign victims transiting through North Macedonia are subjected to sex trafficking and forced labour in several sectors: construction, textile and agricultural sectors in Southern, Central, and Western Europe. As another vulnerable group are children, especially Roma, are subjected to forced begging and sex trafficking through forced marriages. Migrants and refugees traveling or being smuggled through North Macedonia are vulnerable to trafficking, particularly women and unaccompanied minors.

A relevant support activity available in the country is the **SOS line** of help from human trafficking, which has been managed by the Open Gate since 2002. Since its establishment, it proved to be one of the most effective methods for the prevention of human trafficking. Operators provide safety tips for jobs abroad, crisis intervention, emotional and physiological help, legal counselling for victims and their parents, relatives etc. In 2019, 348 calls (207 women, 141 men) were registered on the SOS hotline.

## Romania

IOM identified back in 2004<sup>5</sup> that the victims are often young women with ages between 15 and 25 years old. Many of them come from single-parent families, and from small to medium towns in Moldova or Oltenia. Young girls from the Roma community appear more exposed to trafficking than girls same age from the rest of the population.

Interviews and public consultations also showed that there is a no strong value attached to education, but mostly on obtaining money, which reflects the lack of models of success in life that is achieved through education and a professional career.

<sup>4</sup> ГОДИШЕН ИЗВЕШТАЈ НА НАЦИОНАЛНАТА КОМИСИЈА ЗА БОРБА ПРОТИВ ТРГОВИЈА СО ЛУЃЕ И ИЛЕГАЛНА МИГРАЦИЈА ЗА 2019 година

<sup>5</sup> See: [https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/who\\_next\\_victim\\_0.pdf](https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/who_next_victim_0.pdf)



The European Union Justice Program designed in 2017 a project together with partners from Romania, Scandinavian Human Rights Lawyers, and others entitled Pro Victims Justice through an Enhanced Rights Protection and Stakeholders Cooperation<sup>1</sup>, which proposed various strategies for handling victims of trafficking, including youth workers, law enforcement, authorities and any other stakeholders involved in victim protection. Among the strategies recommended for those who offer services or interact with the victims are guidelines for engaging empathy and to differentiate between different types of victims, as not all respond to the same approach. Moreover, the paper suggests that one key element in handling victims of human trafficking is empathy and making sure that the victims receive the services they need – accommodation, medical care, mental counselling, medicine and adequate treatments, access to doctors and medical services.

This been said, however, in a recent report launched in the end of June 2020 by the US Embassy in Romania, it is stated that despite this 2017 project, the Romanian authorities scaled down on prevention and victim protection<sup>6</sup>. New procedures for implementation of victim protection measures were drafted by the National Anti-Trafficking Agency (ANITP) in 2019, but the website of the agency is not updated with anything new currently. There is an ongoing discussion about the new standards in victim protection with Ministry of Labour, ANITP and NGOs active in the field of victim protection and sheltering, but no progress has been yet made.

In Romania, there is no emphasis on preparing the victims of trafficking for dealing with the justice system, so that their voices can be heard and no adequate selection of legal counselling with lawyers specialized in the field of human rights, victims’ rights, child protection and women’s rights. Often the victims are given bad advice – for instance to call the “lover boy” to take them out of hospital, so that the authorities have no further responsibilities for them, hence the victims often fall back in the same vicious circle of being trafficked again, although initially they managed to escape their abusers.

Unfortunately, in the rural areas or small countryside villages or towns in Romania, the exploitation of people by traffickers is an everyday occurrence and people are used not to react, either from fear, either from complacency, either from lack of resources or information. There are many localities in Romania ripe with trafficking in human beings, that everyone seems to know about, including the local

<sup>6</sup> See: <https://ro.usembassy.gov/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

police, without any legal consequences for the traffickers or any protection for the victims. In many local communities the common reaction is against the victims, who are labelled as prostitutes and vilified or incriminated instead of traffickers.

A big challenge is represented by the lack of funds for the NGOs that provide services for victims and the lack of resources for the state funded programs, including medical care and mental health services absolutely compulsory for victims of trafficking.

Recently, by the end of June 2020, the US Ambassador in Romania and the Minister of Justice released a joint statement about the human trafficking networks in Romania and the need to address the rampant increase in trafficking cases<sup>7</sup>. The Minister pointed that under the previous PSD government, the aggressors and traffickers were practically given impunity, but stripping the prosecutors of legal tools to enforce the law against them and promised this will change. It was declared that human trafficking and the networks of organized crime in Romania will be tackled until annihilation and combating human trafficking has become a national priority. The new approach underlined the need to act in cooperation with international and European law enforcement for dismantling the pervasive power of human traffickers in the Romanian society.

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Nonetheless, regardless of the new measures and strategies proposed by the government, the lack of education, information, and awareness, particularly in vulnerable communities and groups, will continue to produce victims. The need to involve youth workers in the fight against human trafficking in Romania is more acute than ever; moreover, former victims should become trainers and educators as the best qualified ambassadors for educating and informing the society about the trauma and abuse they suffered and how these can be prevented in the future which will hopefully be addressed by the ANTIP<sup>8</sup> which has announced a new set of measures in cooperation with DIICOT<sup>9</sup> with an accent on increasing the level of information/education and awareness among risk groups, experts in the field, and population, for the period between March-December 2020. Its impact remains to be studied.

<sup>7</sup>See: <https://www.mediafax.ro/social/ambasadorul-sua-apel-la-parlament-sa-lucreze-cu-guvernul-pentru-combaterea-traficului-de-persoane-daca-esti-traficant-de-persoane-te-vom-gasi-si-te-vom-pune-sub-arest-19343983>

<sup>8</sup> (Romanian Agency against Human Trafficking)

<sup>9</sup> (Directorate for Investigation of Organized Crime and Terrorism)



This been said, at the moment, there is no coherent, long-term vision with clear planning and measures for tackling human trafficking by the Romanian authorities. There is no efficient cooperation, in public-private partnerships, with NGOs who have the know-how in victims' protection, enabling those organization to further extend their services for the victims. By the contrary, the government seeks to handle the victims within its system of child protection, which often means keeping the minors in institutionalized state facilities, where trafficking is ripe, being one of the main sources for pimps. Authorities still prosecute persons who practice prostitution, although often they are minors, without investigating possible trafficking networks. There is also a social perception that trafficking is a way of life for some communities and people, and often the police knows the local traffickers and the victims, but fail to act, even in cases when they have a registered complaint. Furthermore, there is the complete lack of training for the police officers and prosecutors, often also for judges, regarding victims of trafficking, sexual abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence, which often includes children. In the recent years, more judges have pronounced decisions that criminalize the victim – for instance motivations of court decisions that refer to the clothes of the victim, her behaviour or previous entanglements.

15 This adds to the lack of detention facilities that has determined many judges to free sexual aggressors, rapists, and abusers, some of them being members of the victims' families and sent them back home in the same environment with the victims. Unfortunately, often victims are not properly represented in the court, as many state lawyers are under paid and disinterested and lacking elementary legal knowledge about victims' rights and women's' rights. Often, one of the main complaints is that the system of investigating trafficking re-traumatizes the victims, because the focus is on identifying the possible suspects, and less on protecting the victims. This aspect is even more damaging for children who are victims.

Lastly, young women and children are the most affected by human trafficking as they are the main targets for organized crime, yet no program is set in place for handling their protection and the awareness necessary to avoid falling prey to the traffickers, organized crime and lover boys. In a study published by IOM in 2004<sup>10</sup> it shows back then that Romania is one of the main countries of origin for victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The report points to the fact that knowing

<sup>10</sup> <https://publications.iom.int/books/vulnerability-young-romanian-women-trafficking-human-beings>

who the potential victims are can help law enforcement for profiling traffickers. Yet, although the Romanian police often know who the traffickers are, being widely known in the community, nothing is done in order to prosecute them. However, the report identifies who are the most vulnerable to trafficking, including the way the school and family provide certain values and models for achieving success in life.

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## Levels of awareness of youth and youth workers in relation to human trafficking

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According to the data collected, the level of awareness of youth and youth workers and stakeholders about human trafficking is very extensively elaborated with **variant perceptions** and **it shows modest levels of awareness** in all the partner countries. Many answers from the participants especially among youth are reserved and short compared with youth workers, in relation to whether they can help to end human trafficking among their peers. Such findings highlight the need to introduce more workshops at schools on this sensitive topic. In general terms, interviewees agreed on a definition of human trafficking as a **gross violation of human rights and exploitation of persons** in forms of slavery, working and sexual exploitation, forced marriage, removal of organs, forced begging and other abusive practices.

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Some interviewees also demonstrated a good awareness of common deceptive tactics used by traffickers, including a false promise for work. In fact, majority of interviewees opined that **main targets** of trafficking of human beings are **young people, especially women and girls from Latin America, North Africa and South Asia, mainly from not EU countries as Nigeria and Ivory Coast but even EU ones like Romania and Moldova** (for instance, citizens from North Macedonia were identified as victims of trafficking in several countries, i.e. in Germany 52 persons were identified who were exposed to labour exploitation).

Interviewees also agreed that the average of victims spans **between 17 and 22 years old**, but also minors are targeted as victims. Youth workers and stakeholders also specified the motivation and trap into falling a victim, particularly those coming from African countries to Europe. Wanting to leave from the deprived, they entrust themselves to a person making a money debt in order to leave with a promise of better life, and motivated by this they undergo a **tribal oath called juju**. They are thus deported with deception in Europe under the control of a correspondent figure, **the mamam**, for various purposes of exploitation. Hence, it happens that these ladies have been lured

to some countries with promises of jobs, yet they have now been sold to the highest bidder and are being used as sex slaves.

An interesting historic focus came out from few answers collected by CESIE in Italy; some of the interviewees, in fact, framed the phenomenon to the past affirming: *“It makes me think about **the so called triangular trade**, also called the Atlantic trade, of slaves from Africa to the fields in South America to work in the cotton, cocoa and tobacco fields [...] It is often thought it is an old phenomenon such as the black trafficking of the 1500s when in reality it is something that still happens today”* (CESIE, Interview Young People, Locals, 14<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> of April 2020).

At the same time, **little awareness or confusion** was found among interviewees in partner countries. For instance, this phenomenon is often **confused with migration or smuggling**. Moreover, since trafficking usually involves a movement of the victim across borders, many of the interviewees do not consider those domestic/in-country cases as part of human trafficking. In Italy, this is covered under the Palermo Protocol.

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Findings also show how human trafficking in North Macedonia results as a **taboo topic** and it is less discussed among youth population. This is evident as one interview affirms: *“Unfortunately, it is still a taboo subject. Most affected are women and children, who are often financially unstable and lack family support, as well as minority **rural groups**, but this does not rule out the possibility that someone who opposes these characteristics may be a victim. (Open Gate La Strada, ID 9, youth participants)*. On the same wavelength in Italy there’s a huge lack of knowledge about the s.c. **“white slave trade”**, a European shade of sexual exploitation which comes from EU human trafficking.

Furthermore, despite the fact that some might be aware of the phenomenon, many times **people do not speak up**. For instance, in the rural areas or small countryside villages or towns in Romania, the exploitation of people by traffickers is an everyday occurrence and people are, unfortunately, used not to react, either from fear, either from complacency, either from lack of resources or information. There are many localities in Romania ripe with trafficking in human beings, that everyone seems to know about, including the local police, without any legal consequences for the traffickers or any protection for the victims. Also, in many local communities the common reaction is

against the victims, who are labelled as prostitutes and vilified or incriminated instead of traffickers. Naturally, this has its toll on young people who have limited amount of information about the risks and realities of human trafficking.

As far as source of knowledge about these topics is concerned, both young people youth workers and stakeholders stated that it was from reading novels, daily or web newspaper articles, by watching newscast, docufilms and tv series both for young people, youth workers and stakeholders; some quoted **sensibilization initiatives** promoted by social/youth/local/charity centres, some studied the phenomenon at school and university as a subject; and few of them had a more direct meeting with the font because they heard stories.




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## Risk factors of becoming a victim of human trafficking

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Questioning about risk factors of becoming a victim of human trafficking young people as participants highlighted various data that can be split in two types: environmental/external and personal/internal ones.

**Environmental/external risks** are the **destitute or vulnerable backgrounds** combined with the **fragility of formal legal frameworks**, followed by a **strong subculture** and the linked little value that is given to life, not only in being a victim but also becoming an executioner. On the same wavelength there is soon a present and strong patriarchy, especially on female victims, the consequent belonging to dysfunctional, absent, neglecting or abusive caretakers or **families**, which could be composed by a single parent, or to state centres for abandoned children. This background represents a fragile frame together with the attitude to life on the street, the lack of love/attention and of self-determination ability and the desire to escape from an environment of violence and abandonment (TEMVI 2014-2016) as they might be exposed from young age to a vicious model of survival.

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Another factor is explained by the fact that victims soon do not have strong ties in their country, they are unable to contact the police or the social services which supposes a **distrust in institutions**. As several participants stated: *“Poverty, homelessness, mental illness, the use of illegal substances and the like.”* (Open Gate La Strada, ID 21, youth worker); *“Perception of unequal opportunities is also one of the root causes of being a victim of THB”* (Open Gate La Strada, ID 3, Public Consultations).

In addition to this contest, many other elements have been considered; **the excessive exposure of young people via the internet and social media** is on , thus having a distorted view of reality, the consequent cult of self-image, a strong disinformation, **places and friendships you can frequent** as they might be influenced by those around them. Most of the interviewees readily answered that they have to be more careful with whom they are going out or whom they meet occasionally. Here a few answers were expressed to the



relevance of the social media too. *“Posting on social networks with the correct location, going out to clubs for the elderly.” (Open Gate La Strada, ID 16, youth worker).*

The **role of technology** in facilitating exploitation and abuse of young people is increasing. A respondent from CCIF field research working in digital literacy for young migrants pointed out in an interview on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2020 that being too confident when dealing with new technology can be risky for youths *“as they interact mostly through technology”*. Internationally, traffickers have used different online platforms to lure their victims into physical locations – for instance, by pretending to be online boyfriends and using deceptive and fraudulent job offers and marriage proposals and hence manipulating victims through sham marriages or the “lover boy” method. Traffickers use to build an online relationship with them, while alienating them from their family and friends. As the relationship progresses, the offender proposes physical meetups to establish trust and dependency with the victim, and they may utilize any combination of attempts, including by using threat and physical punishments to ensure the victim’s submission and captivity (Middleton, 2019).

The other one is the financial crisis we in part still live, especially if we even consider the **monetary currency debt issue** (for example 1 Euro is 350 Nigerian naira). In fact it even happened that people with University degrees ended up victims of trafficking; a participant during the interview affirmed: *“Once a Tunisian University colleague of mine (who came from a wealthy and educated family) told me that she had been lured through social networks with a promise of scholarship abroad and was about to end up in a prostitution network. Now she is an activist against human trafficking in Tunisia, her name is Racha Haffar.” (CESIE, Interview with Youth Workers and Stakeholders, 27<sup>th</sup> of April 2020)*

**The mobility in general** in fact exposes young people to some risks , letting understand that you are not from the place; a participant in fact affirmed: *“Often here in Palermo I had this perception, that when they understand that you are not a local you are the object of strange looks” (CESIE, Interview Young People, Migrant, 10<sup>th</sup> of April 2020).* If we set this process in a proper **emigration** of youth from their country for job seeking it might result a relevant risk factor. Unemployment and the parallel demand for work abroad, the s.c. **get rich quick syndrome**, the general low awareness regarding labour rights as well as the active part that middlemen pay in job facilitation abroad combined with the state of the rule of law, low adherence to laws, corruption, the extent of discrimination based on sexual orientation, restrictions on freedom of speech and perceptions of the outlook of this region

create a broad range of push factors, as the chance of **working in the informal sector**,

where victims are easier forced to take up increasingly insecure and accept low-paid jobs (Nimführ et al., 2020).

According to the 2020 TIP Report, perpetrators use different **deceptive techniques** to lure their victims. One of them is replacing the initially signed contract with a less favourable one or forcing victims to perform a different job than expected. Only victims from the EU Member States exploited in irregular employment can claim unpaid wages and other compensation from the state (Council of Europe, 2020). However, a few youth workers consider that education is very important in order to not become victim of human trafficking or in other way this suggest that youths in North Macedonia not have enough information about the potential risk factors. As the analyses<sup>11</sup> showed most of the potential victims or already identified are with **low education status**.

Despite the deceptive techniques, in Romania, field research also showed that many times victims are directly forced and coerced against their will.

On the other side, the **personal/internal factors** are embodied in **emotional vulnerability** (loneliness, shyness, insecurity), **abuse in childhood, separation from family, naivety/gullibility** (don't check/verify if the job offer you receive is safe/legal), **the lack of critical thinking, sense of displacement, substance abuse, depression and social isolation**.

Two relevant details concerning risk factors of being human trafficking victims came out by Reaching out and Open Gate La Strada fieldwork, and they are respectively the existence of **predatory families**, who sell their own children into trafficking networks or directly to traffickers, and the target victims of **Roma group**. In fact, it is still a present practice of **early drop out of school**, and this is noticed especially among Roma children. The rate of irregular attendance and the dropout rate of Roma children is high both in primary and secondary education. The Roma that attend school indicate higher absences in comparison to their non-Roma peers, which puts students at risk of dropout (UNDP, 2012). A considerable share of young Roma in North Macedonia has never been to school. About one out of

<sup>11</sup> <http://lastrada.org.mk/priracnici/>



ten Roma age 10-18 is without school experience (UNDP, 2012).<sup>12</sup> On average, 39% of Roma high school pupils were enrolled in higher education, while 61% did not continue their education in the period from 2005 to 2017. The average drop-out rate from one to another school year in the period from 2005/2006 to 2016/2017 was 15% in secondary education (Ombudsman of Republic of North Macedonia, 2018).<sup>13</sup> Many Roma children are **unaccompanied**, they can be found on the streets begging or selling items such as wet wipes etc; most probably they make part of an elaborate human trafficking network operating locally and internationally.

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<sup>12</sup> - UNDP. (2012). Roma Education in Comparative Perspective. Findings from the UNDP/WORLD BANK/EC REGIONAL ROMA SURVEY. Roma Inclusion Working Papers UNDP Europe and the CIS Bratislava Regional Centre

<sup>13</sup> Ombudsman of Republic of North Macedonia. (2018). Roma inclusion after the decade of Roma current situation and challenges. Skopje: Ombudsman of Republic of North Macedonia.

<http://ombudsman.mk/upload/documents/2018/Prezentacija-Inkluzija%20RomiVrabotuvanje-07.11.2018.pdf>



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## The role of youth workers in ending human trafficking

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Youth workers can build lasting and impactful relationships in their local community, which in turn creates different opportunities for addressing the issue of human trafficking; the work done every day by countless caring adults who accompany and mentor teenagers is crucial to helping teens remain clear of recruitment by traffickers.

These considerations become relevant even in a communication from the European Commission to the European Parliament, to the Council and to the European Economic And Social Committee and The Committee Of The Regions subtitled "The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012–2016)", where in its second paragraph "Fundamental priorities " it is said that: *"A multi-disciplinary, coherent policy against trafficking in human beings requires the involvement of a more diverse group of actors than before in policy-making [...] These should include civil society organizations, **social and youth workers** [...]"*.

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Generally speaking, youth workers could have been volunteering before, but they also often lack work experience and training in specific sectors. Besides the university formal educational path in Educational Sciences, in Italy it is more common that youth workers tend to have considerably different backgrounds (e.g. psychology, sociology, sport instruction, literature and philosophy, etc.). (INNO4IMPACT 2020). In this way, their involvement materializes in many various actions **from sensibilization, training and recreational activities to mobile street units** (observing, mapping and monitoring the phenomenon and its evolutions at the local level) **and help drop-in desks** (strategic access to request information, guidance and help)<sup>14</sup> like it is usual in Italy.

However, dealing with fragile people who need a human bond, they try **to balance with a welcoming/enveloping and protective approach**, trying to build **an informal relationship**. Balancing the attitude is not enough because it soon happened to be rejected even in having a simple dialogue.

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<sup>14</sup> Ascoli Piceno city association "On the road" ; <https://www.ontheroad.coop/en/intervention-areas/human-trafficking/>

Malta's current youth policy encourages youth workers to develop and implement initiatives which engage youth with fewer opportunities, including young migrants, and promote their participation in community life (Ministry of Education, 2015). In general, youth workers and youth organizations play an integral role in improving the resilience of young migrants who experienced trauma; in fact, the interviews with youth revealed that interactive activities which invite insightful discussions and inquisitive learning appear to be effective in building in-depth knowledge and understanding of trafficking among them.

Youth work in the Republic of North Macedonia has not yet been formally established as a standardized youth support system; the latest national strategy for the period from 2016 to 2025 includes a definition of youth work. According to this document, youth work is an *“organized and systematic process of education and support for the authentic development of young people in order to achieve their overall personal, social and societal potential.”*<sup>15</sup>. Despite this, the youth position in the Republic of North Macedonia remains as challenge, whether they could **help in ending human trafficking among their peers**. In 2018, mobile teams were formed as a result of project activity in only five cities. These mobile teams are composed of representatives of the Ministry of Interior, MLSP and CSOs and from 2018 to 2019, the teams worked hardly identifying many potential victims; as a good example within those mobile teams could be the inclusion of youth workers in future.

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In Romania, **not many young people get involved as volunteers in various non-governmental organizations**, particularly in human trafficking. Youth workers would be beneficial for changing perceptions, informing about the risks and raising awareness among the vulnerable groups but there are no such programs yet implemented in Romania, although the need for education about trafficking in human beings in schools, media campaigns and online has been emphasized by most of the respondents to the interview questions. In fact, many youth workers expressed the willingness to work in programs for raising awareness, informing, and counselling youth and children.

<sup>15</sup> Национална стратегија за млади од 2016 година, р. 17




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## Strengths and weaknesses of youth workers and stakeholders in working efficiently against human trafficking

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Youth workers and stakeholders need to understand how they can contribute to anti-trafficking action in their current professional capacity and what skills and knowledge they will need to serve young people vulnerable to trafficking better.

Besides the fact that the EC defines youth workers as multitask and multi-field operators [*The EU Strategy towards the Eradication of Trafficking in Human Beings (2012–2016)*], it is relevant to highlight the lack of data regarding this figure and the phenomenon of human trafficking, and this says a lot about the need to provide valid and tailored tools for them.

Data collected during field research reflects the following strengths and weaknesses/needs of youth workers in relation to Prevention, Identification and Support of (victims) of human trafficking:

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### Prevention

Prevention initiatives in partner countries are present at different levels. Some participants in this study pointed out that prevention activities are very important such as **education campaigns**, which according to Open Gate La Strada (North Macedonia) interviewees should start even at the primary schools with a designed regular program such as peer education, that is relevant key act in developing positive group norms. Similarly, according CESIE (Italy) interviewees, they affirm to have a clear idea and well developed skills about **addressing the phenomenon at educational settings such as schools**, to raise awareness of the new generations, but they are only prepared to do so at a general level; they lack the **mapping of the reference points** and the ability to identify alarms bells to act in time. One participant said in this regard: "*Working as job counsellor, some young people asked for help indirectly, I often receive small signs of trafficking but without them telling me clearly*" (CESIE, Interview Youth Workers and Stakeholders, 27th of April 2020). According to Reaching Out (Romania), the ANTIP - National Agency against Human Trafficking, has no activities listed since 2017.

Therefore, results in terms of prevention in terms of the little amount of data provided by interviewees

and the content, show that needs are much higher than

strengths requiring an educational, multidisciplinary and oriented approach to the prevention of human trafficking in all partner countries.

## Identification

Youth workers working with vulnerable populations need specialized training to be able to identify and refer the potential trafficking victims, as victims are usually fearful and thus reluctant to testify against their traffickers. For instance, a youth worker from an NGO from a public consultation moderated by CCIF (Malta) shared a case where it was **unclear how to best help the potential victim**. A young woman approached the youth worker during an anti-trafficking event and shared that she was the trafficking victim. However, when the NGO worker tried to refer her to support during their second meeting, the woman was unwilling to testify against her traffickers and refused to report the case. In this way, it results very important to improve or even gain knowledge on **recognizing and addressing the unique needs of young migrants with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)**.

In 2016, general indicators for initial /preliminary identification of potential victims of human trafficking in cases of mixed migration movements in the Republic of North Macedonia were adopted.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, state and NGO sectors raised concerns about low number of identified victims and as most experts reported, but also confirmed by the participants in this study, that there is a **lack of proactive identification efforts**.

For the process of identification and emergence of victims or presumed victims of human trafficking, youth workers and stakeholders affirm to implement a **multidisciplinary** (based on historical and political knowledge, non-verbal and intercultural communication and on sociology and psychology) and a **holistic and communicative approach**, taking into account the various **national referral mechanisms and plans** and complementing them with the **guidelines edited** by valid entities as the IOM, UNHCR and similar. Therefore, in this light, resources which efficiently complement these institutional tools seems to be a need in terms of victim identification. Moreover, participants stated that, possessing team-working skills and a good coordination is vital. For example, in Malta, not all

<sup>16</sup> <http://www.esem.org.mk/pdf/Publikacii/2020/Sostojbata%20so%20trgovijata%20so%20lugie.pdf>

youth workers from NGOs are aware of the existence of the National Referral Mechanism or the role foreseen in it for NGOs is not clear (Council of Europe, 2017).

**Coordination** is also needed at institutional level for a good identification of victims to succeed. For instance, in Romania, there are no integrated mechanisms and cooperation between police officers, community, NGOs or various shelters is almost non-existent, showing again the relevance of coordinated efforts and information of people working against human trafficking.

### Support

Initiatives for victims of human trafficking provided by youth workers and stakeholders range from satisfying **basic needs** such as food, housing, safety and health care to psychological and educational support, work and community-integrative integration. It happens mainly after the victim has been identified by the professionals, and he/she could be accommodated in a **shelter**.

However, according to findings from Open Gate La Strada (North Macedonia), **protection of the male gender is lacking** in the country, because the experience showed that among trafficked children are also boys. And here it comes the issue of **financial resources** and the inadequate regular state budget, as this kind of projects are mainly supported only by NGOs. Moreover, according to results from CESIE (Italy), the need, often underestimated, is the possibility to make a **sustainable support programme** with the victim as central for the success of their reintegration. The use of **terminology** in this supporting phase is also important. During interviews with youth workers and stakeholders it has emerged the need to stop using the word *victims* but instead words as protagonists / responsible for a situation of redemption, avoiding a sense of complacency.

Youth workers from Malta working with young migrants expressed their interest and need in **being more actively involved with the national efforts** to combat trafficking. Government authorities should increase their coordination with youth workers and other stakeholders and allow their involvement in anti-trafficking work.

As far as Romania is concerned, The European Commission identified a series of factors and needs to be addressed in the future, in an update on trafficking on human beings in Romania in 2017, which emphasizes the need for education to shape behaviours, attitudes and change perceptions to better approach the supporting phase.



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## **Youth workers & stakeholders' skills for a multidisciplinary approach towards potential victims or ex-victims of human trafficking**

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This research report has evidenced the need for a multidisciplinary approach towards potential victims or ex-victims of human trafficking in the prevention, identification and support of the phenomenon as three interrelated phases. Research participants expressed a myriad of skills and knowledge that they deem necessary to make the best of their potential as youth workers in the field and excel in approaching the phenomenon:

- **Basic knowledge of the phenomenon at a sociological level**, knowing what the recognition process is (right questions to ask, etc.) plus a general fluency on technical / bureaucratic issues, taking care not to take on roles that do not concern them;
- **Knowledge on differences between human trafficking and migrant smuggling**, as well as the definition of **domestic trafficking**.
- **Basic knowledge of the phenomenon at legislative level and anti-trafficking legal instruments**, keeping up with legislative developments;
- **Knowledge of national victim identification tool and referral plan**;



- Provided **evidence-based research** as a powerful tool in advocacy-messaging;

- To learn how to improve **networking, team working/coordination and international cooperation skills** with institutional, national and foreign realities, to clearly understand their role in anti-trafficking action and the various mechanisms, infrastructures, including those available for children, women, and other vulnerable groups;

- To improve the **comprehensive approach skills** in the complexity of trafficking cases, learning from the experiences of operators who have worked with victims;

- To learn how to **decentralize from a point of ethnocentric view**;

- To learn how to **establish a continuous contact with the victims**, in a more ad personally based support programme, following him/her in all its steps even when finished, in order to **contextualize the individual cases** based on their experience and cultural background, so as to favour a greater understanding;

- To improve **skills to be able to combine bureaucratic tools with objective analysis** of the case, to know how to make the difference, for example, between occasional exploitation (girls who are emancipated perhaps but who sometimes fall back) and actual and effective exploitation;



- To learn more about the **illegal organ trafficking economy**, which is something submerged phenomenon now a day, and also to deepen the knowledge of the **history and culture of the criminal groups / sects** that are behind this phenomenon as *the cultist, the black axe*, etc;
- To improve skills about the process of identification not only of female victims of human trafficking, but also male boys/males and minors;
- To learn to leave space to the upright principle of self-determination of the victims, avoiding infantilizing them.



## Best practices

In addition to the aforementioned needs, as part of the research, each partner country has collected best practices from local, regional or international level related to the prevention, identification and support/intervention of human trafficking victims which complement findings and serves as foundation for the development of YU WOK 2 END HT materials. Criteria is on:

- *Effectiveness*  
Its strategic relevance in achieving a specific objective must have been proven. Its application must have been successful and had a positive impact.
- *Feasibility*  
Easy and affordable to implement.
- *Innovation*  
For the best practice to success, it must involve some innovation.
- *Replicability/adaptability*  
It should be potentially replicable and adaptable to different situations.

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### CESIE, Italy

BEST PRACTICE # 1	
<b>Reference/Citation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://www.associazionepenelope.it/">http://www.associazionepenelope.it/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.associazionepenelope.it/video/">http://www.associazionepenelope.it/video/</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://www.associazionepenelope.it/category/immigrazione-e-tratta/">http://www.associazionepenelope.it/category/immigrazione-e-tratta/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Type of practice</b>	Project “Nuvole” <sup>17</sup>

<sup>17</sup> *Nuvole* means Clouds

<b>Target audience</b>	Foreigners and citizens victims of the crimes provided for in articles 600 and 601 of the Italian penal code, unaccompanied foreign minors, applicants for international protection and victims of human trafficking.
<b>Context/geographical coverage</b>	Eastern Sicily, cities of Catania and Messina
<b>Objective/s</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Promote interventions to combat trafficking for the purpose of sexual and work exploitation in the territory of the Eastern Sicily through a network of services that guarantee social protection, legal and social accompaniment in escaping the situation of exploitation, reception, social and work inclusion of the victims.</li> <li>• Encourage collaboration with institutions and services in the area aimed at prevention and protection of victims</li> </ul>
<b>Description of best practice</b>	The Penelope Association, a non-profit organization founded in 1996 and active since 2001 in coordinating social solidarity against trafficking in human beings, is the body responsible for the project. It is a one-way program of emergence, assistance and social integration aimed at combating trafficking in human beings aimed at sexual, work and / or begging exploitation. The project envisages a diverse network of reception and a program of social and work reintegration of the victims aimed at their full autonomy, also through the experimentation of training placements at local companies.
<b>Impact</b>	From 1 <sup>st</sup> of September 2016 to 30 <sup>th</sup> of November 2017, 93 victims of human trafficking were taken over, mostly Nigerian, Ghanaian, Romanian, Bulgarian and Colombian.
<b>Challenges</b>	N/A
<b>Sustainability</b>	<p>The project is the product of an agreement protocol between the association Penelope and the territorial commission for the recognition of international protection of Trapani city.</p> <p>This project is one of three similar ones implemented in the Sicilian island and coordinated by two other realities, Casa dei Giovani Association in Palermo with project "Maddalena" and Proxima Association in Caltanissetta with the project "Fari 2.0", all funded by the same entity.</p> <p>The initiative was funded by the Equal Opportunities Department, as part of the implementation of the interventions envisaged by the National Anti-Trafficking Plan and in 2019 gained its third edition.</p>
<b>Conclusion</b>	Thanks to the many years of experience in the field, the project in 2019 gained its third edition and this brought the possibility over the time to follow the phenomenon

	in its evolution (variety of methods of enticement in the country of departure and of contact with the victims once they have landed in Sicilian coasts, places of exploitation, identification of characteristics of victims as age, etc.). This is the result not only of the direct work on the field but even of the strong collaboration with local entities and other association implementing similar projects in the island, creating a useful network.
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BEST PRACTICE #2	
<b>Reference/Citation</b>	<a href="https://healproject.eu/en/home-english/">https://healproject.eu/en/home-english/</a>
<b>Type of practice</b>	Project “HEAL” - enHancing rEcovery and integrAtion through networking, empLoyment training and psychological support for women victims of trafficking (AMIF - Grant Agreement no. 863631)
<b>Target audience</b>	Third country national women victims of human trafficking and stakeholders active in the field
<b>Context/geographical coverage</b>	Hosting community and human trafficking victims
<b>Objective/s</b>	<p>The main objective is to facilitate the integration of third country national women victims of trafficking brought to European countries for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The project is ongoing. Next September they will develop a comprehensive healing process based on competence-building, psychological support to foster third-country national female victims of trafficking’s employment related skills and psychological recovery with an ethno-psychology approach, methodology of art therapies and workshops for the creation of fanzines.</p> <p>At the same time, the project aims to encourage networking and collaboration between key actors working with women victims of trafficking and to raise awareness among third-country national women victims of trafficking about the rights and services they are entitled.</p>
<b>Description of best practice</b>	<p>HEAL implemented three macro-types of activities in each involved country:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Activities aimed at gaining better and common understanding of the perceived needs of the three key groups of women victims of trafficking, service providers, and potential employers, and the specificities of these in the different national contexts;</li> <li>2) Activities aimed at increasing interaction between these groups, both locally and at the EU level;</li> </ol>

	<p>3) Activities leading to the design and implementation of the Recovery and Integration Programme, providing innovative and flexible methods for the psychological assistance of victims on the one hand, and for the transfer of employment-related skills through a multi-disciplinary training, transferable to different contexts.</p> <p>These activities were based on various methodologies like active, holistic, intercultural and ethno-psychiatric approach and through visual art, peer to peer and non-formal learning process.</p>
<b>Impact</b>	<p>The project was implemented in Italy, Greece, Spain, and Romania, with the participation of 5 organisations. All countries partnering for the project have in fact been at the centre of mass migration flows in recent years, in many cases reporting high levels of immigration managed by either smugglers, traffickers, or both (IOM, 2017).</p> <p>Although the countries involved differ in terms of the specific systems of assistance and protection available locally for women victims of trafficking, the activities implemented focused on providing victims of trafficking in human beings with better awareness of and access to the rights they are entitled to across different countries and systems.</p> <p>It did so bearing in mind the specific conditions of both victims and services available for their support in the different partner countries of the project, conscious that the methodologies of the action must be tailored locally so as to respond to the individual needs of the groups involved.</p>
<b>Challenges</b>	<p>The implementation phase of the project till now has to face some challenges in two partner countries regards the identification of the women coming from third countries. In fact, in Romania and Greece there are no available valid tools and programs to do a proper emergence process, and it soon happens that instead of being protected and integrated they have been expelled and sent back to their countries of origin.</p> <p>Because of this lack they had to remodel and include also potential women victims (even if not from third countries) as target of the project. The other aspect that slow down the various initiative was the health emergency due to the COVID 19, reason why the networking meeting has to be postponed.</p> <p>The activities with the target are still to be done and are scheduled for next autumn, and probably there will be problems in putting at ease the women involved, letting them open up and actively participate in the activities. At the same time the partners, aware that unpleasant situations could arise, they are predicting how to react in case of more problematic individual cases.</p>

	Furthermore, a challenge is presented by the collaboration in the job matching step given the weak economic context and also the sensitivity of the target involved.
<b>Sustainability</b>	At the end of the project, the job matching database and the toolkit of recovery and integration program will be transferred to a local service provider of each country. Before this, each partner will implement a training for trainers in order to give all the detailed indications for a functional use of these tools.

### CCIF, Malta

BEST PRACTICE # 1	
<b>Reference/Citation</b>	UNHCR (2008). Preventing human trafficking by empowering the most vulnerable: a Prayas-Microsoft collaboration. In <i>Compendium of Best Practices on Anti-Human Trafficking by Non-Governmental Organizations</i> . Retrieved June 16, 2020, from <a href="https://www.unhcr.org/afr/50aa5a4d9.pdf">https://www.unhcr.org/afr/50aa5a4d9.pdf</a>
<b>Type of practice</b>	Prevention programme
<b>Target audience</b>	Poor households with vulnerable youths (above 14 years).
<b>Context/geographical coverage</b>	Rural and semi-urban areas of Assam, Bihar, Delhi, and Gujarat states in India.
<b>Objective/s</b>	The main objective of the programme was to prevent exploitation and abuse of young people by eliminating the most common root causes of trafficking such as lack of education, work opportunities and financial stability.
<b>Description of best practice</b>	In poor communities in India, the lack of socio-economic opportunities often forces young people to accept any employment, increasing their chances of being trafficked. Very often, a qualified youngster from a low-income family is unable to get jobs in the formal market due to the lack of computer and communication skills - a necessity in the job market today.  The programme sought to address this problem by improving the learning opportunities for vulnerable young people. It provided a two-month preparatory training, additional life skills and a four-month IT module for the participants. At the end of six months, trainees enrolled for job placement services and NGO's existing personality development courses.
<b>Impact</b>	The programme provides a protective and supportive environment, where a potential trafficking victim can seek sustained employment and improve their quality of life in



	<p>their community. A crucial element is job placement after training. Alongside the IT-based training and creation of livelihood opportunities, the implementing NGO has developed a support system for the promotion of entrepreneurship, community ownership and micro-enterprise besides adding programs of adult and family life education. Through its placement centres, the NGO was able to ensure 100 per cent placement to more than 3000 youth, many of whom could have been possible victims of trafficking if not engaged in this innovative prevention programme. Many have joined small, medium establishments in data entry work and as receptionists.</p>
<p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<p>The author of the best practice reported no challenges. However, developing an effective training programme which can provide young people with practical skills and lead to their employment is a challenge by itself. In this best practice, the problem was addressed through a partnership with an IT giant Microsoft which provided a training module for the programme. As nowadays, corporate houses are increasingly entering the arena of social development, a tremendous opportunity lies in collaborating with them. Moreover, given that the practice targets young people from poor households, ensuring the trainees' access to IT equipment might be challenging for NGOs with limited resources.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p>	<p>The implementation of this best practice and its sustainability is dependent on several factors. Firstly, the implementing agency needs to develop a mechanism for identifying and selecting youths vulnerable to trafficking, who would benefit from technology skills training. Secondly, it is essential to create an effective, up-to-date training programme which takes into account both the needs of the trainees and the demands of the job market. Instructors must be trained to work with vulnerable youths with different levels of education; developing a separate manual for trainers would allow hiring instructors from non-youth-work backgrounds. Thirdly, building a support system such as job placement arrangements with companies and career guidance are important in ensuring trainees' transition from vulnerability to self-sufficiency. Partnerships with corporate, local governments and communities can be a key to the programme's sustainability.</p>
<p><b>Conclusion / Lessons learnt</b></p>	<p>IT skills training for young people may open opportunities for them not only in the local job market but also globally if the programme helps to develop remote working skills. A possible improvement to the best practice would be additionally providing guidelines for young people on how to seek freelance opportunities online and potentially become self-employed. In the Maltese context, for example, online freelancer-matching platforms like Fiverr or Upwork could help young people choose from a wide variety of assignments, where they could also utilize their native language skills. As the COVID-19 has accelerated the shift to remote working, this would also</p>

	allow the graduates of the programme to be more flexible in their job choices, decreasing the chances of being trafficked.
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BEST PRACTICE # 2	
<b>Reference/Citation</b>	OSCE (2020). <i>Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes</i> . Retrieved May 25, 2020, from <a href="https://www.osce.org/projects/cthblixv">https://www.osce.org/projects/cthblixv</a>
<b>Type of practice</b>	Simulation-based training
<b>Target audience</b>	Anti-trafficking stakeholders (law enforcement, prosecutors, social-service agencies, and NGOs)
<b>Context/geographical coverage</b>	The training is implemented by the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The OSCE region is witnessing a significant movement of people triggered by ongoing conflicts, general instability, and a lack of economic opportunities in the neighbouring areas and some OSCE regions. This movement comprises refugees, migrants, unaccompanied children, and stateless persons, among others, who are highly vulnerable to trafficking. Against this backdrop, since 2017, the OSCE has been conducting specialised training for anti-trafficking stakeholders. Its methodology is grounded in experiential learning through realistic simulations of labour and sexual exploitation of refugees and migrants, including children. The simulation exercise is hosted in the Center of Excellence of Police Units (CoESPU) in Vicenza, Italy.
<b>Objective/s</b>	The simulation training aims to enhance the capacity of anti-trafficking stakeholders, in particular from the Mediterranean area and concerned African countries. The participants learn to effectively investigate and prosecute human trafficking, and promptly identify and address the needs of trafficked persons along migration and displacement routes, thus improving synergy among key national stakeholders. Each simulation scenario strives to emphasize the constitutive elements of trafficking (the act, the means, and the purpose).
<b>Description of best practice</b>	Over the course of a week, participants enter a hypothetical country/region, and where, based on the tools and legal framework provided, they simulate a counter-trafficking response. A feedback cycle is built into the simulation itself to ensure that participants learn/correct their mistakes and engage in exchanges among themselves and with trainers during the week. The participants receive scenarios (inspired by real cases) in which migrants fell victim to transnational organized crime syndicates. Fictional profiles of traffickers and victims, including fictional ID cards, credit cards, money transfer forms, police records and residence permits were created for the simulation. During the exercise, played out in real-time, participants must coordinate their work to provide help to victims coerced into working in agricultural fields or a sewing factory or forced into



	prostitution. For the sake of realism, fictitious brothels and apartments of the traffickers and scenes of labour exploitation are set, and students and social workers act as traffickers and victims. Besides, IT specialists, technicians, drivers, and logisticians are mobilized to ensure the functioning of the simulation.
<b>Impact</b>	Displaced people continue to face grave risks of human trafficking. The simulation training allows the practitioners to confront the realities of migration and anti-trafficking work. The exercise emphasizes the importance of a human rights-based and multi-agency approach in helping victims of human trafficking, where stakeholders from law enforcement, prosecution, labour inspectorates, social services, and civil society can work and collaborate. During the project, nearly 300 practitioners in total participated in four international simulation-based exercises held in English. In January 2018, the first national training exclusively for Italian practitioners was conducted for 55 trainees; and live international training in Russian was conducted in September 2018 in Astana, Kazakhstan, for 57 participants.
<b>Challenges</b>	Participants had to work and collaborate with colleagues from other countries and from various fields of expertise to solve trafficking cases. As in real life, such multi-agency cooperation can be at times challenging. Sometimes for this reason participants may depart from the script during the exercise. In this case, trainers must intervene and help to refocus the attention of the trainees when they seriously deviate from what is expected. Yet, developing the knowledge and skills of the trainees is the priority and trainers must be able to favour the learning process over the script at the same time. Crucial parts of the exercises are the debriefings at the end of each day, during which the actions taken by the teams are analysed and improvements discussed.
<b>Sustainability</b>	Owing to the partnership of the OSCE with Italy's Carabinieri and the CoESPU, as well as with a significant number of partners and donors (UNODC, UNHCR and the Office of the UN Special Representative on Sexual Violence in Conflict, Guardia di Finanza, Italian State Police, University of Padova, Municipalities of Venice and Vicenza, and independent experts) this complex exercise is now widely recognized as a model for the next generation of anti-trafficking practitioners around the globe.
<b>Conclusion / Lessons learnt</b>	This project builds expertise among anti-trafficking practitioners, develops powerful and practical networks across borders and disciplines, and stands as an enduring example of international cooperation, which is vital in combating human trafficking.

Open Gate La Strada, North Macedonia

BEST PRACTICE #1	
<b>Reference/Citation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R47SPyzWKjI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R47SPyzWKjI</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ip64iEuG9Vw">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ip64iEuG9Vw</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXBEeERYAH4">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bXBEeERYAH4</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_QcD058kgU">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D_QcD058kgU</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tVERjsBE14">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tVERjsBE14</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwJxoi8BDNI">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CwJxoi8BDNI</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZsiJ95AWLE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZsiJ95AWLE</a></li> </ul>
<b>Type of practice</b>	Creation of a youth-based group aimed at peer to peer education and awareness raising on the topic of human trafficking
<b>Target audience</b>	Youth ranging from 14 to 30 and general public
<b>Context/geographical coverage</b>	The practice was situated on the territory of Macedonia, mostly in the capital city of Skopje but also in the central, western and eastern parts of the country in bigger cities and even smaller communities. Cities included were: Prilep, Bitola, Kocani, Kumanovo, Stip, Veles, etc.
<b>Objective/s</b>	The main objective for the creating of this youth-group was to educate, engage and motivate young people on the whole territory of the Republic of North Macedonia on the topic of human trafficking, equip them with the skills and background to implement their own creative ideas and spread them amongst their peers and communities.
<b>Description of best practice</b>	<p>Open Gate sees the youth and youth activism as one of the key factors in building up strong communities of the future. This is the reason why we decided to support 11 local youth initiatives aimed at raising the awareness about human trafficking as a reality in their own communities. All initiatives were led by teams, with the support of their local youth promoter, who made their creativity and ideas a reality and managed to cover more than 500.000 beneficiaries on the territory of whole N. Macedonia.</p> <p>Youth are recognized as a major-risk group for human trafficking, which is precisely why this project is especially designed for increasing youth's knowledge on the topic and actively involving them in the fight against human trafficking. Open Gate, by using the method of "learning by doing", will mobilize the youth for the development of the best preventive youth campaigns and products. This action will increase the</p>

	<p>youth's involvement in civic activities with considerable influence over the peer's perception of human trafficking as well as bringing public attention and innovative approaches of addressing the risks of human trafficking.</p>
<p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p>Through the first part of this project Open Gate managed to intensively educate 45 youth on the topic of human trafficking and violence in depth, its forms, means of recruitment, definitions and etc all with a specific goal to help guide them thru their future projects and develop their ideas in a right path.</p> <p>What is special for this project is that we did not have one single impact, but 12 different outcomes which impacted 12 different communities through 12 different tools and events. Amongst the more effective and creative campaigns were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A fully produced short 20minute movie based on a true story –The movie followed a story of one of the previous victims that Open Gate sheltered, the story was modified in order for it not to give off the true identity of the real girl. It had one official premiere, in the museum of contemporary art in Skopje, which gathered more than 100 people and 4 side showings which were organized in a high school and in a local bar.</li> <li>• Original interactive theatre play – based on 3 real life stories making the visitor feel as a part of the play and the story. The play was shown 6 times in 3 different cities each play gathering around 50 viewers. For the needs of the theatre play an original soundtrack was distributed and an original script.</li> <li>• One designer fashion line/clothing brand was produced as a way of promoting workers' rights as an essential part of human rights with a special emphasis on labour exploitation in the garment industry. The label produced 30 pieces of clothing all with a symbolic meaning and embroidery and in 3 colours – white, red and black. The final event was organized as a runway show with and interactive room showing videos of public opinion regarding human trafficking and 3 sculptures with strong messages from victims.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Challenges</b></p>	<p>When it comes to challenges the part that proved to be the most difficult was the beginning of the planning of the campaigns. The young people tend to be more interested in directly implementing the campaign and not in the first plenary part, so at first it seemed like they were not sure about how they will organise themselves but at the end they proved to be quite efficient and active in the direct implementation and promotion of their activities.</p> <p>The mentors were divided into 2 groups – one being the ones who were responsible for equipping the youngsters with the knowledge in creating a successful social media campaign, along with creating of promotional materials, hashtags, slogans, targeted</p>

	dissemination and promotion and the second group oriented towards the assistance in the direct project activity implementation process.
<b>Sustainability</b>	<p>When it comes to sustainability, even in the beginning of this project we decided that we would break the stigma of young people easily losing interest – that is why we decided that with this group we would use social media as the main tool of our communication with the youth group. We created a Facebook group and regular give information on our ongoing activities, opportunities and projects targeting young people.</p> <p>This group is more than just a platform for connection, it's a virtual support group which manages to keep even the intimate connections between the youngsters strong and active, gives them a platform to express what they believe in and find allies in their future activities.</p>
<b>Conclusion / Lessons learnt</b>	Youth, given the opportunity to work alongside adults who are willing to make a civic change and spread their experiences, can be active leaders of activist communities and organizations, to not give the youth the chance to speak what they believe in is a crime. They deserve to be listened to, to be seen as collaborators and treated as equals.

<b>BEST PRACTICE #2</b>	
<b>Reference/Citation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="http://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/SHTPrint_final.pdf">http://lastrada.org.mk/wp-content/uploads/2018/12/SHTPrint_final.pdf</a></li> <li>• <a href="http://lastrada.org.mk/album/forum-teatar-dimkata-angelov-gaberot/">http://lastrada.org.mk/album/forum-teatar-dimkata-angelov-gaberot/</a></li> </ul>
<b>Type of practice</b>	Project
<b>Target audience</b>	<p>Children - from 11 to 17 years of age involved in the education system as well as group of local professionals (Teachers, social workers, community leaders etc.)</p> <p>It is important to add that the Forum Theatre can be easily adapted and used for all age groups.</p>
<b>Context/geographical coverage</b>	National level- North Macedonia
<b>Objective/s</b>	To Increase youth's awareness and sensitivity towards refugees/migrants and their immigration process and difficulties faced with special attention on human trafficking.
<b>Description of best practice</b>	The Forum Theatre has proven to be one of the most effective ways to change certain attitudes and raise awareness, especially amongst young people.

	<p>The “Forum Theatre” is an activity which is part of the “Theatre of the Oppressed”, a theoretical framework and set of methods invented by Augusto Boal in the 1960’s in Brazil – it is a method in which the audience is included in the play and thus encouraged to find alternatives and new solutions to the problematic situation shown on stage. The content of the play is often based on a real-life experience or situation and written by the actors who are in it.</p> <p>The procedure of the Forum Theatre began with the training of a group of pupils to be actors in a play and the exploration of problematic and risky situations in relation to human trafficking. Situations which should reveal social exclusion, stigmatization and oppression as one of the main sources of human trafficking are used as main guiding points for devising the play.</p> <p>The Forum Theatre aims at empowering and liberating vulnerable groups, encourages reflection on problems that are on the one hand part of the daily lives of the oppressed group and on the other hand can lead to human trafficking. This way, the project wants to do justice to the interwinedness of the general social situation of the vulnerable groups with the specific risks of human trafficking.</p>
<p><b>Impact</b></p>	<p>Activities such as media campaigns and training for target groups are mostly implemented in a “top down” manner, where experts teach the vulnerable groups and give them information. Media campaigns raise awareness about the problem of human trafficking, which is very important for the prevention of human trafficking and a better dealing with the problem in the society.</p> <p>The Forum Theatre includes the vulnerable groups in the implementation process and thus tries to create equality between the professionals, the NGO and the target group. As especially young people and women are endangered to become victims of trafficking, we want to work directly with this group and integrate them in the creation of the project. As their skills and knowledge will be needed and worshipped, they will gain a sense of independence and self-confidence to find peaceful solutions to overcome and fight social oppression. They will learn how to protect themselves from being trafficked, how to raise their voice and seek help to protect their rights as human beings, children and/or women.</p> <p>Implementation of the forum theatre with the children and professionals (pedagogues and psychologists), proved to have very positive effect. Some who attended these events said: <i>“I believe that your visit aroused interest in many things that happen around students, and they are not even aware of it. Children are the greatest and most sincere critics. The theatre was great and instructive. All praise, for our and your pleasure.”</i> - professional staff from elementary school Koco Racin on Kumanovo.</p>



	The special teacher and educator from the school, „ Kliment Ohridski“, from Bitola say: <i>“We rarely have such beautiful events in our school. We are surprised by the way this activity is implemented, which has contributed to getting familiar with a topic that is not very familiar to our students and us”. “We want such events in our school. It was too wonderful and very interesting”,</i> say N.N student from elementary school, Petar Po Arsov in Skopje.
<b>Challenges</b>	During the implementation of the forum theatre, there is a possible risk of lack of interest among target group to participate actively on the event because of the sensitivity of the topic and the upfront of the forum theatre as method. This may be due to the fact that many young people in our country in the education system have not learned to openly present and fight for their views and opinions. And they are ashamed to play a role.
<b>Sustainability</b>	The implementation of the Forum Theatre does not require much space and is easy to implement in educational institutions and even outdoors. There is no need for many technical means and it is implemented by young actors, most of whom do it for pleasure and as a challenge and not for big money funds.  It is expected from the teacher and students that participated in the Forum Theatre to continue to organize workshops and forum theatre in their schools, related to human trafficking and smuggling and related topics such as migration, vulnerable categories, and integration. The schools is expected to be available for recommendations and ideas for future forum theatres as creative and interactive way of learning in schools and also to integrate as method in daily curricula.
<b>Conclusion / Lessons learnt</b>	Key learning: Young people own a great potential to create a positive social change. Young people are fearless, brave, dynamic, highly motivated and they have the ideas, the creativity and great energy to shape a better world. If young people are guided and stimulated in a right way, they have a great potential to create a positive social change in the world we live in now. This is why we see the young people as a core within our society, in modern times where there are unlimited possibilities of connection, there is a unique chance for young people to unite in solidarity and act on the matters they don't see as fit within their societies.

## Reaching Out, Romania

Reaching Out has stated that, unfortunately their country does not have good practices in tackling human trafficking and in prevention among youth. It is worth noting that on the 26<sup>th</sup> of June 2020, the US Embassy in Romania released a press statement that says Romania is on surveillance list level 2 from the US government, the second year in a row, which means that Romanian authorities have not intensified their efforts to reduce human

trafficking. Reason why the Romanian partner purpose its own organisation as a good example of good practice in its country and provides a subsequent analysis.

BEST PRACTICE # 1	
<b>Reference/Citation</b>	Iana Matei, De vanzare: Mariana, 15 ani, Ed. Rao, 2011 <sup>18</sup>
<b>Type of practice</b>	Organization.  Romania, unfortunately, does not have good practices in tackling human trafficking and in prevention among youth. It is worth noting that on 26 of June 2020, the US Embassy in Romania released a press statement that says Romania is on surveillance list level 2 from the US government, the second year in a row, which means that Romanian authorities have not intensified their efforts to reduce human trafficking. Worse, the last government did not pursue the traffickers and organized crime heads, hence not many cases went to the courts of justice. In regards to victims of trafficking there is not much concern or protection for victims <sup>ii</sup> .
<b>Target audience</b>	Victims of human trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation
<b>Context/geographical coverage</b>	-
<b>Objective/s</b>	-
<b>Description of best practice</b>	Reaching Out Romania – we are an organization that strives to protect the victims, identify the victims, identify the risk factors for potential victims, provide medical assistance and access to education for victims, so that they can restart life and prevent them from falling again in the hands of traffickers.
<b>Impact</b>	-
<b>Challenges</b>	The current challenges consist in the fact that the Romanian governments do not sustain programs for victim protection and do not fund NGOs active in this field. The US Embassy Report on Human Trafficking in Romania for 2019 <sup>19</sup> points that “the government decreased efforts to protect victims.” There have been identified 497 victims in 2018 <sup>20</sup> .

<sup>18</sup> <https://booknation.ro/recenzie-de-vanzare-mariana-15-ani-de-iana-matei/>

<sup>19</sup> <https://ro.usembassy.gov/2019-trafficking-in-persons-report/>

<sup>20</sup> [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336847955\\_Trafficking\\_of\\_human\\_beings\\_in\\_Romania\\_497\\_registered\\_victims\\_and\\_130\\_convicted\\_traffickers/link/5db6c689299bf111d4d51e70/download](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/336847955_Trafficking_of_human_beings_in_Romania_497_registered_victims_and_130_convicted_traffickers/link/5db6c689299bf111d4d51e70/download)



	<p>Romanian authorities use the national victim identification and referral mechanism, with the support from NGOs and ANITP. However, reports on human trafficking show that authorities did not identify victims, especially in placement centers, but only after there was already an ongoing investigation.</p> <p>Another challenge is the fact that authorities still prosecute persons who practice prostitution, although often they are minors, without investigating possible trafficking networks.</p> <p>Another challenge is the perception that trafficking is a way of life for some communities and people, and often the police knows the local traffickers and the victims, but fail to act, even in cases when they have a registered complaint.</p> <p>One of the main challenges is the complete lack of training for the police officers and prosecutors, often also for judges, regarding victims of trafficking, sexual abuse, sexual assault and domestic violence, which often includes children. In the recent years, more judges have pronounced decisions that criminalize the victim – for instance motivations of court decisions that refer to the clothes of the victim, her behaviour or previous entanglements.</p> <p>Also, regarding to court decisions, the lack of detention facilities, determined many judges to free sexual aggressors, rapists, and abusers, some of them being members of the victims’ families and sent them back home in the same environment with the victims. Unfortunately, often victims are not properly represented in the court, as many state lawyers are under paid and disinterested and lacking elementary legal knowledge about victims’ rights and womens’ rights.</p> <p>Often, one of the main complaints is that the system of investigating trafficking re-traumatizes the victims, because the focus is on identifying the possible suspects, and less on protecting the victims. This aspect is even more damaging for children who are victims.</p> <p>Another challenge is represented by the lack of funds for the NGOs that provide services for victims and the lack of resources for the state funded programs, including medical care and mental health services absolutely compulsory for victims of trafficking.</p>
<p><b>Sustainability</b></p>	<p>The main elements that need to be addressed for best practices, identified by the European Commission, Romanian authorities, NGOs and the US Embassy in Romania are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) The level of societal wellbeing – though programs for supporting victims and job creation, to offer real opportunities for people who feel they</li> </ol>

	<p>have no other choice and take higher risks by enrolling to working abroad through various networks.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2) Education for changing perceptions and informing people about the risks and implications of trafficking in human beings</li> <li>3) Stronger law enforcement</li> <li>4) Programs for victim protection and for facilitating their access to education and professional skills</li> <li>5) Funding for NGOs who offer accommodation, medical care, mental health services and protection.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Conclusion / Lessons learnt</b></p>	<p>There is no coherent, long-term vision with clear planning and measures for tackling human trafficking by the Romanian authorities.</p>

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## Conclusion

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The present report has outlined the basis of the national context, awareness and needs in terms of prevention, identification and support on the issue of human trafficking in Malta, Italy, North Macedonia and Romania as partner countries of the project.

Nation contexts in partner countries are varied, with different mechanisms set in motion to tackle the phenomenon. What the study has evidenced is a still strong presence of human trafficking, a lack of coordinated action among actors and the special vulnerability suffered by youth and specially women as those most at risk. Levels of awareness seems to be different. While some awareness is present in relation to the targets and the role of technology as a channel for luring victims, confusion was also made evident during interviews in relation to the difference between different phenomena such as human trafficking vs smuggling. Moreover, in many areas, especially in rural ones, human trafficking is still a taboo allowing for silence to prevail. This comes as a risk factor, together with numerous environmental and personal factors which this study has proven, need to be equally addressed.

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In terms of the role of youth workers, it has been shown their relevance in the prevention, identification and support of potential and ex-victims of human trafficking. While some partner countries promote their involvement, in others, there is still great potential to be exploited leaving space to improvement of youth workers' skills. In this sense, this report has outlined which are the strong and weak points in relation to their knowledge in the matter, for instance the role in education for the prevention of human trafficking; the need for a multidisciplinary and coordinated approach in the identification of victims; and the need for coordinated action between state and NGO interventions in the supporting phase. In this light, the study highlights the importance of treating the phenomenon in its three phases as interrelated and worth of a multidisciplinary approach to allow youth workers to better intervene against human trafficking among youth.

Lastly, this report has presented a series of best practices identified in each partner country that addresses either prevention, identification and/or support of victims and that, given their effectiveness, feasibility, innovation, replicability and adaptability complement the research and will serve as bases for YU WOK 2 END HT project's material and tool development following a multidisciplinary approach.




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