

INCLUSIVE HOLISTIC CARE FOR MIGRANT VICTIMS OF SEXUAL VIOLENCE

PROJECT BROCHURE

Up to 58% of female migrants and 32% of male migrants experience sexual violence.

A participatory approach

The project's objectives are realized through the application of a **mixed-methods** study design, combining quantitative and qualitative research.

A participatory approach was applied through the involvement of victims, representatives of migrant and victim support organisations and professionals via an **Implementation and Community Advisory Board**.

This committee was set up in each of the partner country and gathered each 4 months to discuss preliminary results and facilitate dissemination.

Introduction

Within the European Union, **Migrants, Applicants for international protection and Refugees** (abbreviated as **MAR**) are at high risk of sexual victimization prior to, during and after their arrival in Europe (Chauvin et al., 2015; Keygnaert et al., 2014). Within this population, up to 58% and 32% of females and males respectively, have experienced sexual victimization (Keygnaert et al., 2012; De Schrijver et al., 2018). Adopting an integrated and holistic approach (i.e. encompassing forensic, medical and psychosocial care) from detection to follow-up has been recognized as the best care for all SV victims (WHO, 2015), including victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (FRA, 2014). However, access to holistic care for MAR victims is hampered by a broad range of barriers.

Frontline professionals working with MAR victims of sexual violence, often lack the specialist knowledge, language skills and tools to provide inclusive and holistic care for MAR victims, or do not know where to refer them. There is a need to build capacity of key professionals working with MAR victims of sexual violence through training, provision of tailored tools and streamlined care pathways in order to address gaps in all aspects of care from identification to follow-up.

Objectives

The **general aim** of the INHeRE project is to **improve** inclusive, holistic **care** for **MAR victims of sexual violence**, regardless of their age, gender, sexual orientation and/or legal status by strengthening the capacity of multi-sector frontline professionals. To make care pathways **inclusive** for all MAR victims, specific attention is paid to MAR victims who are male, LGBTQIA+ and/or victims of trafficking.

More specifically, the project aims to

- ✓ **Build knowledge** and refine culturally-competent **skills** and **practices** of 5 key professional groups working with MAR through online and on-site training;
- ✓ **Align** national **policies** with EU regulations and guidelines for safe reporting of sexual violence regardless of legal status;
- ✓ **Bridge** competences, practices and policies **across professions** in order to streamline care pathways for MAR victims.

The project targets **five professional groups**: (1) staff working in asylum reception centres, (2) staff working in sexual assault centres, (3) psychologists, (4) intercultural mediators and interpreters, and (5) police inspectors.

Project consortium

The project consortium composes of Ghent University: International Centre for Reproductive Health (ICRH) & Centre for the Social Study of Migration and Refugees (CESSMIR) (BE); the Belgian Federal Service of Public Health (BE); Payoke (BE); Victim Support Europe (EU); NHS, The Havens (UK) and the Irish Department of Justice (IE).

An international expert panel, including the European Federation of Psychologists' Associations (EFPA) and the Platform for International Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants (PICUM), provides invaluable support to the project.



An Roinn Dlí agus Cirt
Department of Justice



PROJECT OUTCOMES

GOOD PRACTICE TOOLS

Triage Tool for identification, care and referral of victims of sexual violence at European asylum reception and accommodation initiatives

Sexual violence is rarely disclosed or reported in the setting of asylum reception and accommodation initiatives. However, professionals working in these settings can contribute to the identification and recovery of victims by having sufficient awareness of indicators of sexual violence and how to apply this, providing appropriate care and referring to specialist services where needed. This Triage Tool can assist professionals to undertake these actions and refine their skills in order to meet the unique needs of MAR victims. The Triage Tool has been published in four languages (English, Dutch, French and Italian).



Good Practice Tool for police hearings with migrant, applicant for international protection, refugee (MAR), trafficked, and LGBT+ victims of sexual violence

Victims of sexual violence, regardless of their background and the circumstances of their abuse, may all experience trauma. Trauma can trigger behaviours that may be misunderstood by police officers thereby hindering successful investigations and causing further harm to victims. This Good Practice Tool, specifically designed for police officers and law enforcement officials, aims to guide professionals on trauma-informed practices applicable to a police interview setting. This process involves understanding how to communicate with a victim, creating a safe and supportive environment, and establishing a relationship of trust while preventing secondary victimization. The Good Practice Tool has been published in four languages (English, Dutch, French and Italian).

Upgraded international remote interpreting system, including user checklist

Many MAR face language barriers on a daily basis. These challenges may significantly hinder a victims' ability access to their full rights, including effective assistance from professionals (Wells et al., 2019). A certified interpreter or intercultural mediator might help professionals to overcome these barriers. To promote the reliance on certified interpreters in the European context, the project upgraded and translated an online application that allows for real-time interpretation of a consultation between a care professional and a MAR-victim of sexual violence. This application enables a remote interpreter to observe and listen to the consultation, thereby interpreting both verbal and non-verbal content.



Streamlined safe reporting framework for migrant victims of sexual violence

MAR victims of sexual violence might not feel able to access justice by reporting to law enforcement and seeking protection out of fear of arrest, detention, or deportation. Safe reporting in which “victims’ rights are prioritized ahead of enforcement of immigration rules” enables MAR victims to report an offence in safe conditions, by protecting their identity, removing the risk of prosecution in regards to immigration offences and by providing protection from the perpetrators (PICUM, 2017).

A policy analysis of European and national legislation from the point of view of safe reporting for MAR victims was carried out, complemented with stakeholder consultations. The analysis subsequently informed the development of a streamlined safe reporting framework for migrant victims of sexual violence, aiming to address a number of challenges and gaps in current practice. Further adaptations were made based on feedback collected via focus group discussions and online surveys with police officers, staff working in sexual assault centres and MAR survivors. The safe reporting framework has been published in four languages (English, Dutch, French and Italian).

TRAININGS

Massive Open Online Course: “Sexual Violence & Migration”

To enhance professionals’ knowledge on sexual violence and migration and to improve their skills in identifying and providing care, an e-learning course consisting of 8 comprehensive modules covering different topics has been developed. The course is available in four European languages and can be followed for free on the learning platform Ufora, from Ghent University.



Practice-oriented Training-of-Trainers: “Sexual Violence & Migration”

In order to demonstrate the implementation and promote the dissemination of the good practice tools, four separate Training-of-Trainers on “Sexual Violence and Migration” were developed and given to (1) police officers, (2) interpreters and intercultural mediators, (3) psychologists and (4) professionals working in asylum reception centres.

ALL TOOLS AND TRAININGS ARE AVAILABLE FOR FREE AT:

<https://bit.ly/2ZPLWlm>

COLOFON

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Project website

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Disclaimer

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