



OSCEval News is the evaluation newsletter of the Office of Internal Oversight.

Its aim is to provide insights into the OSCE's work in evaluation, by sharing key evaluation findings and conclusions, as well as new developments regarding the OSCE's overall evaluation culture.

Evaluation is a management tool that contributes to decision-making, strategic planning, and organizational learning.



This edition of OSCEval News is dedicated to the project

## Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes Live Simulation-based Training Course

*Case study III of the*

**OIO Evaluation of Capacity Development and Learning in the OSCE**

### Introduction

The project Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes, a live simulation-based training course, was developed and conducted by the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR-CTHB). The multi-year (2016-2019) Extra budgetary project, which is still ongoing, addresses limitations in the identification of victims of trafficking in human beings and in the prosecution of traffickers, and aims to strengthen capacities of stakeholders, counterparts in participating States (pS), and Partners for Co-operation.

This case study is one of five evaluations that contribute to an organization-wide independent Evaluation of Capacity Development and Learning in the OSCE, undertaken by the Office of Internal Oversight (OIO) in 2018.

The purpose of the evaluation is to assess the relevance, effectiveness and sustainability of OSCE activities in support of learning and capacity development, and to identify good practices within the organization that can be shared with executive structures and contribute to organizational learning.

### Project Description

The Combating Human Trafficking along Migration Routes project (the CTHB simulation) is underpinned by a theory that training is more effective when trainees “learn by doing”, rather than through lectures and presentations. Its purpose is to improve how practitioners from pS and Partners for Co-operation address trafficking in human beings (THB), by providing them with useful and effective models for multi-agency, victim-centered, and human rights-based approaches, at the same time giving them the opportunity to apply those approaches in practical and realistic scenarios.

The typical simulation takes five days. During this time the trainees experience various parallel story lines that cover THB for the purposes of both sexual and labour exploitation. Participants are required to work collaboratively to advance the action. The implementation of the exercise hinges on detailed scripts that encompass a number of expected actions and learning objectives. The “trainers” for the exercise take the form of a group of expert facilitators who monitor the action in real-time and give instructions or directions that help to steer the simulation toward the most effective outcomes. No two simulation exercises are the same since how the action plays out depends on the efforts of the trainees.

### Evaluation Findings and Conclusions

#### Relevance and Effectiveness

The CTHB simulation is particularly relevant in the sense that the project addresses THB in mixed migration flows, an issue that is challenging for pS. The project is also aligned with OSCE goals to assist pS to implement their commitments concerning THB. The content of the simulation reinforces OSCE approaches and good practices. The project also supports its gender mainstreaming objectives by providing insights into the gendered nature of trafficking in human beings. Attention is paid to diversity among professional trainee teams, especially within professions that have traditionally been male-dominated.

\*The image below is from the OSCE official website.



The CTHB simulation has been effective in several ways. Most significantly, short-term outcomes in terms of how trainees change their perceptions and perspectives were achieved. Trainees report that their participation provided them with a better understanding of the role that other professional groups play in combating THB and this, in turn, has broadened their perspectives on the value of a multi-agency approach and supplied them with a model for how to work co-operatively. Value is also placed on the opportunities presented during the simulation for collaboration, teamwork, compromise and interaction with colleagues from other countries, all of which are prerequisites for multi-agency work to function properly outside of the simulated activities.

The CTHB simulation has not had such clear results in terms of meeting the core objectives of the project concerning increased abilities to investigate and prosecute THB cases and to effectively identify victims of trafficking, as the project places far more emphasis on attitudinal change and enhancing co-operation than skill building.

One of the notable results of the project is the networking that occurs between the participants and that, in many cases, continues after the event. A few trainees reported that once back to their jobs they relied on contacts from the simulation to assist them in resolving THB cases. Many also use the network as a more general means to keep in touch. Some trainees also report to have changed their professional practices to reflect the lessons from the simulation on using a victim-centered approach. These are, possibly, the most promising in terms of potentially improving investigation and prosecution.

While the CTHB simulation project was not designed to directly affect change at the organizational level, implicit in the project design is the idea that practitioners will be proactive in applying a human rights-based approach to investigation and protection of victims as well as co-ordination among different agencies. In order to affect long-term change, these practices must ultimately become institutionalized, and not remain with the individual. The evaluation could not determine whether a “critical mass” of trainees had been engaged from particular pS, or whether the “right people” have been trained to bring about this sort of longer-term change. However, it has been reported that some of the trainees have conducted training for their colleagues, and others have taken steps to broaden the scope of national co-ordination mechanisms for combating THB. More efforts to ensure institutional change might, nevertheless, be required in the future.

One expected result of the project is that the simulation methodology will serve as a tool to pS for their own capacity building on multi-agency co-operation. However, given the financial costs and number of experts involved, the simulations are not easily replicable. Consequently, national efforts to develop smaller-scale and more feasible simulation exercises might require support in the future.

## Methodology

The CTHB simulation-based training course makes use of a particular methodology. The project has benefited from two working groups of experts in the field who developed the content, have been instrumental in conducting the simulations and have continued to modify the methodology based on lessons learned after each event. The effectiveness of the methodology mostly depends on the inter-play between the action, directed feedback and reflection periods. A vital component of the methodology is creating opportunities for the trainees to test new approaches without the risk of violating the rights of real victims or jeopardizing investigations or prosecution.

The evaluation also identified some areas in which modifications could further increase the project's effectiveness. For instance, there are contrasting opinions about the right balance between action and reflection. Some project directors and trainees expressed the view that fewer actions and additional feedback and more specific guidance would be very useful.

Project monitoring and reporting have focused on measuring outputs through post-simulation questionnaires of trainees and reports by the experts that provide recommendations for future simulations. The OSR-CTHB collects information about results through contacts with field operations staff and the OSCE network of anti-trafficking focal points, and as part of its regular monitoring work. However, this process is not systematized or outlined in a dedicated monitoring plan, and therefore information about longer-term results tends to be anecdotal.

## Sustainability and Follow Up

The full simulation-based training has a total budget of around € 2 million, and not all funding has been secured. Cost-sharing in various forms has been used effectively to conduct the simulations and to enable a greater number of trainees to take part. Partnerships have emerged during the life of the project, with the hosting organizations (in Italy and Kazakhstan), other international organizations and through co-operation with OSCE field operations. The sustainability of the CTHB simulation project in its present form is uncertain because it is not easily replicated either by other international organizations or at the national level. The greatest potential for replication of the methodology seems to be in forms that are less intensive than the full international event (“scaled-down” initiatives). For instance, several field operations have either been inspired by the simulation methodology to adjust their own programming or are planning follow-on projects suggested by trainees.

## Conclusions

The CTHB live simulation-based training course is an innovative and immersive methodology that makes use of experiential learning, and has had positive outcomes. The evaluation offers ten recommendations to further strengthen its methodology, long-term results, sustainability, follow-up and cooperation modalities with OSCE field operations, as well as to support pS when designing their own simulations.

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