



APPLYING GENDER-SENSITIVE APPROACHES IN COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

OCCASIONAL PAPER NO. 10

ISBN: 978-3-903128-68-2

Published by the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator
for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

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Design: Tina Feiertag, Vienna

Illustrations: shutterstock

Cite as: OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings,
Applying gender-sensitive approaches in combating trafficking in human beings (Vienna, 2021)

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) is a pan-European security body whose 57 participating States span the geographical area from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Recognized as a regional arrangement under Chapter VIII of the United Nations Charter, the OSCE is a primary instrument for early warning, conflict prevention, crisis management and post-conflict rehabilitation in its area. Its approach to security is unique in being both comprehensive and co-operative: comprehensive in that it deals with three dimensions of security – the human, the politico-military and the economic/environmental. It therefore addresses a wide range of security-related concerns, including human rights, arms control, confidence- and security-building measures, national minorities, democratization, policing strategies, counter-terrorism and economic and environmental activities.

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Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator
for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

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Acknowledgements

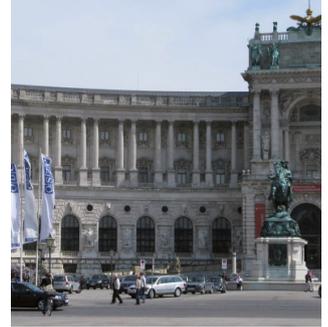
This report was prepared by the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (OSR/CTHB) under the lead of Anne-Lise Robin, Programme Officer, with the support of Maaïke van Andrichem, Tarana Baghirova, Jerome Elam, Tatiana Kotlyarenko, Oleksandr Kyrlyenko, Ignas Rekasius and Tetiana Rudenko. The report is based on the findings of a study carried out by international experts Marija Andjelković, Angela Henderson and Polina Smiragina-Ingelstrom. This publication was proofread by Cynthia Peck-Kubaczek.

OSR/THB would like to thank all the survivors, practitioners, representatives and others who provided insights that made this report possible. The Office also thanks the colleagues who contributed their expertise and provided valuable contributions for the report.

More information can be found on our website <https://www.osce.org/cthb> under the ‘Gender’ tab.

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Foreword

The relationship between trafficking in human beings (THB) and gender is both intrinsic and complex. Proper attention to the gender dynamics of both the trafficking crime and the response to it can yield more impactful outcomes. On the other hand, failure to understand the relationship between THB and gender leads to inadequate responses that exacerbate stereotypes and create barriers to the provision of protection and assistance to all victims. For this reason, States are required under the Palermo Protocol and other international instruments to adopt and implement gender-sensitive approaches to combating THB. There are however a number of stumbling blocks that hinder the application of such approaches. The most prominent obstacle is that none of the legal or policy anti-trafficking instruments offers clear guidance on how gender should be understood when implementing a gender-sensitive approach. Nor do they explain what such an approach entails exactly. The lack of a comprehensive focus on the full spectrum of gender-related aspects has also limited the understanding of who potential victims might be or what their vulnerabilities and needs are. This has hindered the development of tailored assistance and protection systems, as well as mechanisms for prevention or strategies for prosecution.

The aim of this publication is to ensure that no victim is left behind, regardless of their gender or the form of exploitation they have endured. Exploring different aspects of gender-sensitive approaches as enshrined in the OSCE Ministerial Council Decisions, it expands the usual focus on protection of women and girls in sexual exploitation. It is hoped that this publication will increase the understanding of gender-sensitive approaches to combating THB both with regard to the nature of the crime as well as responses to it, building awareness that such approaches are essential in all steps of the anti-trafficking response, from providing assistance and protection, to addressing root causes and rendering justice through criminal proceedings.

Applying gender-sensitive approaches can contribute to achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, as well as ending abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against all persons. I hope the analysis and recommendations outlined in this paper will serve as an evidence-based tool for the OSCE participating States and the global anti-trafficking community, supporting them to develop more holistic, tailored and gender-responsive prevention, protection and prosecution strategies. By doing so, they will better be able to address the gender-specific vulnerabilities and needs of victims of trafficking, as well as become more alert to crimes that are oftentimes overlooked.

Valiant Richey

OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings

My Image ...

Give voice to the words that cannot be spoken.
Speak words for the voices that cannot be heard.
Look at their eyes and tell what you see.
Look at their eyes, you're looking at me.
There in a cage and trapped in a place.
No way out and led to disgrace.
The camera looks on, an unblinking eye.
The images caught, do you see me cry?
I am 7, one of 3 children there.
Adults with us too, and us in despair.
Look in my eyes and tell what you see.
Look in my eyes and inside of me.
In that place I'm a thing, to them nothing more.
Used hit and hurt, what comes next, what's in store?

AND THEN ...

Too many years trapped in that place.
But I'm no longer there, and I have a face.
I have a heart and a soul and things now to do.
I have a purpose today, to reach out to you.
Look into my eyes and what do you see?
My image restored, the real me.
A voice, restored and meant to be heard.
Look in my eyes, I want you to see.
No broken child, but a man who is FREE.

Sean Wheeler, survivor, author and speaker

Executive Summary

By ratifying the international instruments related to combating trafficking in human beings (THB) and adopting the OSCE commitments regarding the same, all of the OSCE's 57 participating States have committed themselves to implementing gender-sensitive approaches to combating THB. While these instruments take into account the fact that trafficking affects women, men, girls and boys, in none of the legal or policy anti-trafficking instruments is there clear guidance about what a gender-sensitive approach entails. Moreover, current approaches are fragmented, as they do not cover all aspects of the crime of THB or responses as related to gender.

This Occasional Paper is based on findings from a multi-method research project (hereinafter the Study), which included surveys, expert interviews and expert group meetings carried out with participants from more than half of the OSCE's participating States (36). By bringing together the voices of survivors, anti-trafficking experts, service providers and law enforcement, this paper provides a broad account of gender aspects in THB. It also offers a basis for discussion about possible ways to apply gender-sensitive approaches. Supplementing the data from the Study, desk research and an analysis of existing literature on the topic of THB and gender has demonstrated that behind the term "gender-sensitive approaches", there are a number of elements related to the crime of THB and responses to it that are still concealed by gender stereotyping.

The paper therefore explores a range of gender aspects that are often not addressed in existing prevention, protection and prosecution strategies. Taking into account both the promising practices and problem areas that have been identified during the Study, the following steps are recommended for ensuring that policies and programmes undertaken in response to THB are truly effective:

Political will and advocacy

To support the identification of both male and female victims in non-corresponding trafficking sectors¹, as well as to respond to their specific needs and address their vulnerabilities, it is urgent to garner political will and provide support to all victim groups through the three pillars of prevention, protection and prosecution. It is also important to invest in supporting gender equality to tackle the root causes of trafficking, such as gender discrimination, gender-based violence and other gender-related risk factors.

Data collection and research

Lack of data on the role played by gender in different forms of trafficking impacts the ability of policy-makers to develop adequate prevention, protection and prosecution strategies. It is therefore important to establish proactive mechanisms to gather gender-disaggregated data, especially with regard to under-researched forms of trafficking. Continued research on gender aspects of THB can also play a key role in supporting the development of adequate prevention, protection and prosecution strategies that match the actual experiences of trafficking victims and their needs.

Capacity building

Gender biases and stereotypes make certain victim profiles and forms of trafficking less visible. Lack of knowledge and methods to deal with this hinders adequate prevention and detection work. It is therefore critical to increase the knowledge of anti-trafficking actors to strengthen their ability to identify *non-ideal victim*² profiles and adequately respond to the needs of all victims, whether female or male, in line with States' gender-related obligations and commitments.

Comprehensive intersectional and non-discriminatory approach

Gender alone does not determine whether a person is at risk of being trafficked. It is thus important to look at other intersecting factors, such as age, disability, illness, substance abuse, homelessness, ethnicity or racial belonging, and sexual orientation. It is also important to address the risk of double victimization that occurs as a result of victim-blaming attitudes and discrimination in the delivery of assistance and justice. This can be done by combating stereotypes and designing assistance programmes based on the actual needs of victims, taking into account multiple factors impacting the individual's wellbeing.

Awareness-raising and education

Stereotypical representation in anti-trafficking campaigns can be detrimental, not only to identifying all victims, but also to the victims themselves. It is therefore essential to develop campaigns that do not reinforce the image of the *ideal victim*, but instead include aspects of gender that often remain unaccounted for in awareness-raising. It is also important to educate on harmful and positive masculinities in order to promote engagement and tackle stereotypes.

Organizational changes in the criminal justice sector

Last but not least, the lack of adequate gender-sensitive approaches throughout the criminal justice process has an impact on the treatment of victims and the outcome of prosecution cases. All efforts should be made to strengthen training of law enforcement and judicial professionals in victim-centred and gender-sensitive approaches, and to promote female representation in criminal justice systems to improve interactions with both male and female victims.

Developing comprehensive gender-sensitive prevention, protection and prosecution strategies is of paramount importance to ensure that no victim, regardless of the form of exploitation, is left behind, and that no form of trafficking, regardless of the number and gender of the victims affected, is unaddressed. It is also important to remember that such a holistic approach does not involve a visibility competition between different groups of victims, but is rather a way to ensure that all victims receive adequate protection and justice. Over the last 15 years, the share of detected male victims of trafficking has more than doubled. They now represent 35% of detected trafficking victims worldwide.³ However, increased attention to the needs of men and boys or other persons who do not fit the *ideal victim* profile should not imply a reduced space for addressing the needs of women and girls and tackling the most identified forms of trafficking on the ground.

Trafficking cases present different gender markers, since the needs of victims differ according to a number of factors including their gender and the form of exploitation they have been exposed to. These needs permeate all areas of prevention, protection and prosecution. To break the trafficking cycle, anti-trafficking responses must be designed accordingly. While acknowledging that there are not only financial and political limitations, but also complexities in the practical implementation of a gender-sensitive approach, gender considerations cannot be dissociated from responses to THB and should be incorporated meaningfully into all anti-trafficking efforts.

Abbreviations

CEDAW	(UN) Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
CRC	(UN) Committee on the Rights of the Child
CSCE	Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe
EIGE	European Institute for Gender Equality
EU	European Union
FRA	(European Union) Agency for Fundamental Rights
GRETA	(Council of Europe) Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings
ICAT	Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons
ILO	International Labour Organization
IOM	International Organization for Migration
ODIHR	(OSCE) Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
SAKI	Sexual Assault Kit Initiative
OSR/CTHB	(OSCE) Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
THB	Trafficking in human beings
OCEEA	(OSCE) Office of the Co-ordinator of OSCE Economic and Environmental Activities
OHCHR	(UN) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime

Terminology

Trafficking in human beings (THB)

The present study uses the definition of the term trafficking in human beings as introduced in Article 3 paragraph (a) of the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (hereinafter the Palermo Protocol)⁴:

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

Victims and survivors of trafficking in human beings

In this paper, the terms *victim* and *survivor* refer to individuals who have been subjected to THB according to its definition in the Palermo Protocol. While the two terms are used interchangeably, they can have different implications in different contexts. In some instances, the word *victim* might be used to refer to someone still experiencing exploitation or the effects thereof, whereas the term *survivor* carries the meaning of someone who has exited or escaped from a trafficking situation.⁵ The term *survivor* is chiefly used by service providers and victims themselves to acknowledge the bravery, strength, autonomy and agency of trafficking victims and to highlight the act of overcoming victimization. On the other hand, in the criminal justice process, the term *victim* is used to refer to

individuals who have endured harm as a result of crime, regardless of whether or not they have exited the trafficking situation. Being identified as a *victim* of THB affords such individuals rights and legal standing within criminal justice systems.

Ideal victim

The term *ideal victim* is used in this paper to refer to the image of an individual affected by THB who is readily afforded victimhood status because of perceived adherence to certain socially constructed criteria. The *ideal victim* is a construct that is conditional to the specific culture in which that victim is identified. The *ideal victim* is often viewed as being female, vulnerable and weak, while the *ideal offender* is often viewed as being male, big and bad. This definition is drawn from a theory introduced by Nils Christie in 1986 identifying five characteristics for an *ideal victim*. The first refers to the victim's vulnerability and weakness; the second is conditional to an individual's participation in carrying out some sort of respectable task; the third is the location where the victim cannot be blamed for being at the time the crime occurred; the fourth relates to the offender being big and bad; and finally the fifth is the lack of association and absence of any relationship between the victim and the offender.⁶

Intersectionality

Men, women, boys and girls are exposed to different THB risks not only because of their gender, but also because their vulnerability is subject to intersecting factors such as age, nationality, ethnicity and socio-economic status. Gender inequalities are often compounded by discrimination based on race and ethnicity, migrant status, national or social origins, poverty, weak social and economic structures, lack of employment opportunities and lack of equal opportunities in general. These different characteristics interact with one another to create multiple forms of discrimination that intensify the vulnerability of an individual to trafficking.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction



The historical development of the anti-trafficking debate offers interesting insights into the gender aspects of THB. The construction of international anti-trafficking conventions, which can be traced back to the beginning of the 20th century, shows particular attention to the exploitation of women and girls. Gender-neutral language later paved the way for the recognition of men and boys as victims of trafficking, thereby supplementing the first protective legislation, designed for women and girls in prostitution, with a more comprehensive view of exploitation.

Historical background

The earliest international agreements in response to THB were the 1904 International Agreement for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic and the 1910 International Convention for the Suppression of the White Slave Traffic. The term “white slavery” was used to refer to the enforced prostitution of women and girls who were coerced, lured, or abducted for the purposes of sexual exploitation.⁷ In 1921, boys were included, with the explicit reference to “children of both sexes” as victims of trafficking, in the League of Nations International Convention to Combat the Traffic in Women and Children.⁸

Gender-neutral language was introduced with the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Persons and of the Exploitation of the Prostitution of Others⁹ by using the term person in relation to the victim. While the 1949 Convention does not mention men specifically in the context of prostitution, the term person implies that a victim could be either a woman or a man, a girl or a boy.

In 1979, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) addressed the issue of trafficking of women by including a specific article encouraging State Parties to “take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.”¹⁰

In 2000, the Palermo Protocol¹¹ provided the first international definition of THB and introduced a more expansive list of various forms of trafficking (see above, p. 11), in which women and children were highlighted as especially vulnerable. The international legal response to THB was focused on establishing a robust criminal justice response. With the development of the European legal frameworks such as the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Persons in 2005¹² and the Directive 2011/36/EU in 2011,¹³ the focus expanded to incorporate a human rights based approach, and further mandatory provisions for the support of victims were introduced. At the same time, the recognition of men as victims of THB became more explicit in these instruments. For example, the

explanatory report to the Council of Europe Convention refers to *man*, and the term *men* appears in the preamble to the EU Directive 2011/36/EU.

Interestingly, other legal instruments developed to tackle slavery and forced labour have mostly used gender-neutral language. For example, the 1926 Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery known as the Slavery Convention¹⁴ and the 1930 International Labour Organization (ILO) Convention on Forced Labour¹⁵ use the gender-neutral term of *person*. On the other hand, the 1956 Supplementary Convention on the Abolition of Slavery, the Slave Trade, and Institutions and Practices Similar to Slavery introduced specific clauses that highlight the exploitation of women.¹⁶ Among other provisions, this document urges State Parties to the Convention to take the necessary measures to abolish and abandon “any institution or practice whereby: (i) A woman, without the right to refuse, is promised or given in marriage on payment of a consideration in money or in kind to her parents, guardian, family or any other person or group; or (ii) The husband of a woman, his family, or his clan, has the right to transfer her to another person for value received or otherwise; or (iii) A woman on the death of her husband is liable to be inherited by another person.” Most recently, the 2014 ILO Protocol on Forced Labour to the Forced Labour Convention of 1930 underlines its application “to all human beings without distinction” and explicitly recognizes “women and men, girls and boys” as victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced or compulsory labour.¹⁷

The early focus on women and girls in the first anti-trafficking treaties was due to the growing awareness of the forcible recruitment of women and girls into prostitution. Over the years, the perception of the scope, extent and nature of the crime has expanded to include other forms of trafficking, and to formally recognize men and boys as victims. Today the international fight against THB takes an integrated, holistic and human rights based approach, largely recognizing victims from various parts of the world, belonging to any ethnic, age or gender group.

International legal requirements to apply gender-sensitive approaches

The importance of gender as a THB factor led to the recognition of the need for gender-sensitive approaches in several international anti-trafficking instruments such as the Palermo Protocol¹⁸:

Article 6 - Assistance to and protection of victims of trafficking in persons:

Each State Party shall take into account, in applying the provisions of this article, the age, gender and special needs of victims of trafficking in persons, (...).

Article 10 - Information exchange and training:

States Parties shall provide or strengthen training for law enforcement, immigration and other relevant officials in the prevention of trafficking in persons. (...) The training should also take into account the need to consider human rights and child- and gender-sensitive issues (...).

Although the term *gender* is not defined, these provisions clearly created obligations on those who ratified the Protocol, including 55 of 57 OSCE participating States¹⁹.

The Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings,²⁰ to which 47 OSCE participating States are party, also established the overarching obligation for State parties to promote gender mainstreaming and gender equality throughout the development and implementation of anti-trafficking measures:

Article 5 – Prevention of trafficking in human beings:

Each Party shall promote a Human Rights-based approach and shall use gender mainstreaming and a child-sensitive approach in the development, implementation and assessment of all the policies and programmes referred to in paragraph 2. [this including: research, information, awareness-raising and education campaigns, social and economic initiatives and training programmes]

Article 17 – Gender equality:

Each Party shall, in applying measures referred to in this chapter, aim to promote gender equality and use gender mainstreaming in the development, implementation and assessment of the measures.

Likewise, the 2011/36/EU Directive on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims²¹ also includes gender-specific provisions:

Para 3

This Directive recognizes the gender-specific phenomenon of trafficking and that women and men are often trafficked for different purposes. For this reason, assistance and support measures should also be gender-specific where appropriate. The ‘push’ and ‘pull’ factors may be different depending on the sectors concerned, such as trafficking in human beings into the sex industry or for labour exploitation in, for example, construction work, the agricultural sector or domestic servitude.

Para 25

Member States should establish and/or strengthen policies to prevent trafficking in human beings, including measures to discourage and reduce the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation, and measures to reduce the risk of people becoming victims of trafficking in human beings, by means of research, including research into new forms of trafficking in human beings, information, awareness-raising, and education. In such initiatives, Member States should adopt a gender perspective and a child-rights approach.

With the adoption of this Directive which applies to all 27 European Union member States, the EU clearly acknowledged THB as a gendered crime that affects men and women differently in different sectors of exploitation, and therefore recognized the need for a gender-sensitive response. Most recently, the European Parliament resolutions on the EU Strategy for Gender Equality²² and on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims²³ reiterated the need for a clear recognition of the gendered dynamics across all forms of THB, including for purposes of labour exploitation, and the need to ensure gender-specific services and support to victims appropriate to their needs.

OSCE commitments to adopting gender-sensitive approaches

In addition to these main instruments which have created legal obligations on the vast majority of OSCE participating States to apply a gender-sensitive approach to THB, the OSCE has also developed a series of commitments that apply to all 57 participating States.

Until 2000, anti-trafficking documents developed by the OSCE had a distinct emphasis on women. As early as 1991, at the Moscow meeting of the Conference on Security and Co-operation in Europe (CSCE, the predecessor of the OSCE), the participating States sought to “eliminate all forms of violence against women, and all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women including by ensuring adequate legal prohibitions against such acts and other appropriate measures.”²⁴ A few years later, in 1999, the OSCE participating States adopted the Charter for European Security, which among other human dimensions of security, committed to “undertake measures to eliminate all forms of discrimination against women, and to end violence against women and children as well as sexual exploitation and all forms of trafficking in human beings.”²⁵

In 2000, Ministerial Council Decision No. 1 emphasized the issue of trafficking using the gender-neutral term of *human beings*, thereby indicating that efforts should not be limited to protecting women, but should instead focus on the rights of all victims.²⁶ With the adoption in 2003 of the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings, the focus expanded to include specific references to gender and men.²⁷

The most recent gender-specific OSCE commitments relate to three main topics: the contributing factors leading to trafficking, the response to trafficking, and data collection.

Gender-related contributing factors

Throughout the commitments adopted by the OSCE participating States, violence against women and discrimination based on sex have been recognized as among the root causes of trafficking. In particular, Permanent Council Decision No. 557 (24 July 2003) on the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings provided an agreed-upon definition of the root causes of THB as follows:

*poverty, weak social and economic structures, lack of employment opportunities and equal opportunities in general, violence against women and children, discrimination based on sex, race and ethnicity, corruption, unresolved conflicts, post-conflict situations, illegal migration and the demand for sexual exploitation and inexpensive, socially unprotected and often illegal labour.*²⁸

The 2003 OSCE Action Plan reiterated references to economic and social policies aimed at addressing the root causes of THB, and encouraged participating States to take “appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of gender equality, the right to equal pay for equal work and the right to equality in employment opportunities.”²⁹

One year later, the OSCE Ministerial Council adopted the Action Plan for the Promotion of Gender Equality,³⁰ which tasked relevant OSCE institutions and structures, when addressing underlying causes of THB, with assisting “participating States in tackling the lack of opportunities for women, female unemployment, and other gender aspects of trafficking, including the demand side of sexual and other forms of exploitation.” The following year, the Ministerial Council called upon participating States “to take measures to strengthen the economic independence of women, including ensuring non-discriminatory employment policies and practices, providing equal access to education and training, equal remuneration for equal work, increased work and educational opportunities, equal access to and control over economic resources with a view to reducing women’s vulnerability to all forms of violence, including domestic violence and trafficking in human beings.”³¹

Finally in 2011, the Ministerial Council recalled “the need for economic and social policies aimed at addressing the root causes of the trafficking in human beings, especially to eliminate discrimination against women in employment and to address economic factors that increase the vulnerability of women to trafficking, (...) Facilitate the development of women’s entrepreneurial and other work-related skills, and, incorporate gender aspects, with particular attention to women, in migration policies, in order, inter alia, to prevent human trafficking and re-trafficking.”³²

These decisions constitute a package of commitments for participating States to effectively tackle discrimination against women in the socio-economic sphere, which is seen as a contributing factor that leads to situations of exploitation. Over the past decades, there has been progress towards achieving gender equality. However, much still needs to be done to ensure this essential foundation for a trafficking-free world. To advance gender equality and women empowerment, the involvement of men and boys is essential, as well as recognizing challenges of patriarchal systems and gender stereotyping. As illustrated above, attention to the contributing factors that lead to the exploitation of men and boys is still limited.

Gender-sensitive responses to trafficking

The OSCE participating States have committed themselves to addressing specific aspects of the trafficking response that require a gender-sensitive approach. For example, in the Action Plan to Combat THB, they committed to “establish special anti-trafficking units – comprising both women and men – with advanced training in investigating offences involving sexual assault or involving children, in order to promote competence, professionalism and integrity.”³³

With the adoption of MC.DEC 6/17, participating States committed to “strengthen education and awareness-raising efforts, including human rights education, and develop and implement empowerment programmes which take into account the particular needs of women, men, girls and boys, in order to enhance the capacity to recognize, prevent and fight human trafficking within communities”; and to “adopt a victim-centred, trauma-informed and, in that respect and in line with Ministerial Council Decision No. 14/06, gender-sensitive approach, that fully respects human rights and fundamental freedoms in all preventive and assistance efforts.”³⁴

Moreover, on the topic of trafficking of children specifically, MC.DEC 7/17 encourages participating States “to adopt a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach that takes into account the respective gender-specific concerns of girls and boys, in the best interests of the child, and fully respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of children subjected to human trafficking or sexual exploitation”³⁵; and MC.DEC 6/18 encourages participating States to “adopt a victim-centred and trauma-informed approach that takes into account the respective gender-specific concerns of girls and boys and the best interests of the child, and fully respects the human rights and fundamental freedoms of children subjected to human trafficking.”³⁶

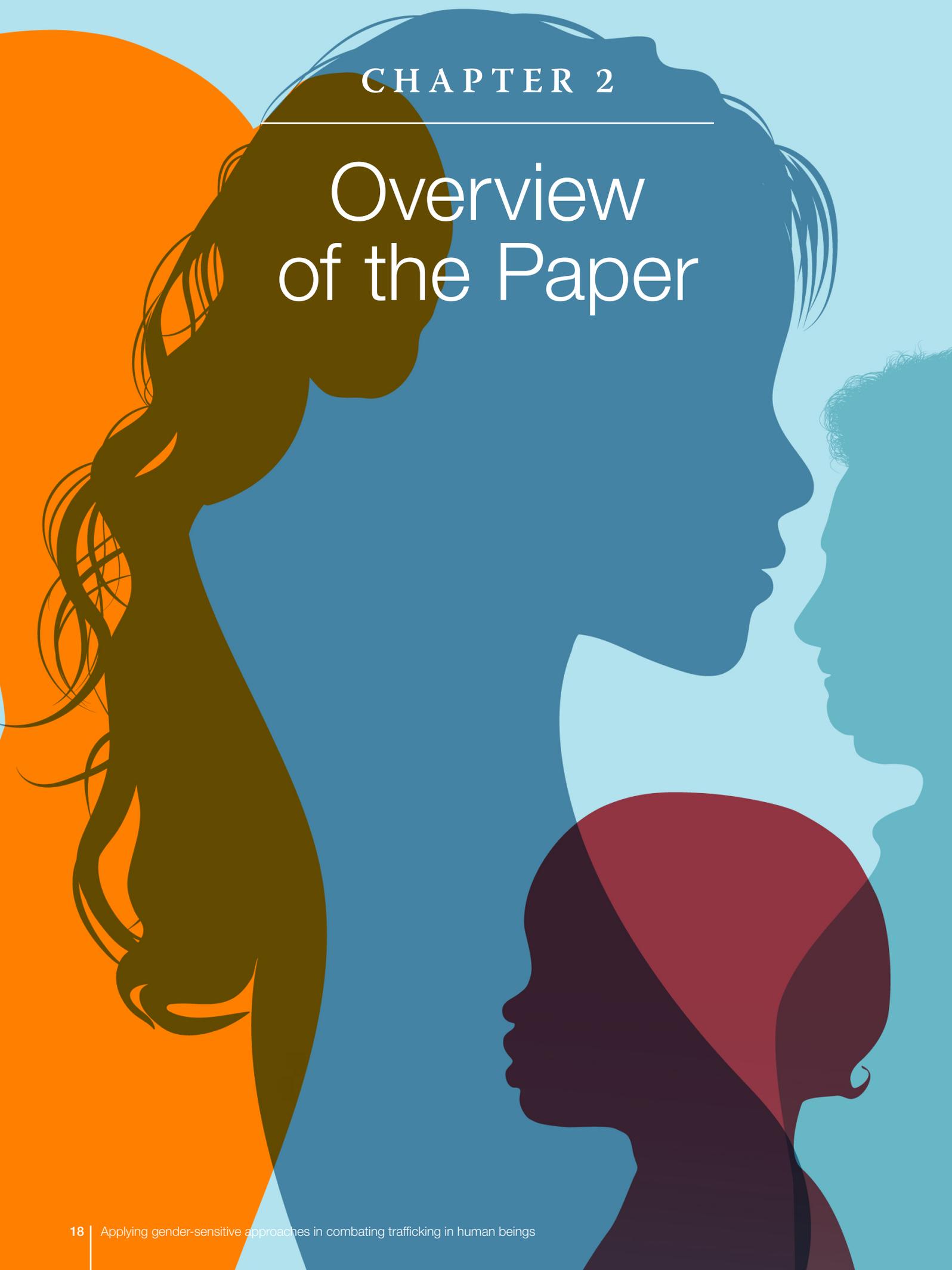
Data collection

Throughout OSCE commitments, the importance of collecting data disaggregated by sex has been highlighted as a way to inform and improve the response to THB. In the 2003 OSCE Action Plan, participating States were encouraged to “[collect] separate data related to women, men and children victims of trafficking, and [improve] research into and analysis of subjects such as the character and scale of THB and the trafficking and exploitation mechanisms deployed by the organized criminal groups, in order to develop effective and well-targeted prevention measures on trafficking in human beings”.³⁷ They were also urged, “with the support of the OSCE structures and institutions if requested, to improve research and the system of data collection and analysis, with due regard to the confidentiality of data, and where possible to disaggregate statistics by sex, age, and other relevant factors as appropriate, in order to better assess the character and scope of the problem and develop effective and well-targeted policies on trafficking in human beings.”³⁸

These provisions underline that reliable and comparable data is essential for maintaining a clear understanding of the issues, monitoring the effectiveness of anti-trafficking efforts, and identifying areas where further action is needed. In this regard, the OSCE Special Representatives and Co-ordinators on Combating THB have regularly advocated for the establishment of comprehensive and unified data collection systems in countries they visited.³⁹ Only so can accurate data on the number of detected cases be provided, and identified and assisted victims of trafficking be disaggregated by age, sex, forms of exploitation, and countries of origin and destination.

CHAPTER 2

Overview of the Paper



As noted in the previous chapter, the OSCE participating States have committed to – and are in most cases legally obligated to – adopt and implement gender-sensitive approaches to combating THB. There are however a number of stumbling blocks that hinder the advancement of such approaches. The most prominent obstacle is that while the international legal framework and the OSCE commitments take into account the gendered nature of the crime, none of the legal or policy anti-trafficking instruments offer clear guidance about what a gender-sensitive approach entails. In addition, existing attention and resources are often insufficient to cover all gender aspects of the crime of THB and the response to it. Thus, the application of gender-sensitive approaches often remains abstract and incomplete. Gaining a better understanding of the gender aspects of THB can help policy makers and practitioners apply gender-sensitive approaches.

Purpose

The following chapters explore gender aspects of THB, taking into account the experiences of both male and female victims, in relation to all forms of trafficking and all areas of anti-trafficking work. In this context, discussions about non-stereotypical profiles of victims and under-detected forms of exploitation are important. It is also imperative to note the longstanding reality of gender-based violence toward women and girls and the effects this has had. The challenge for anti-trafficking advocates and practitioners is to balance this reality with other aspects of THB. It is essential to acknowledge the fact that there is no single profile of a victim, or *ideal victim*, and there are no one size fits all responses. By highlighting gender aspects that until now have received limited attention, this paper promotes a holistic response to trafficking that moves beyond assistance needs to look at steps for prevention and prosecution. It also encourages efforts to apply gender-sensitive approaches to all forms of trafficking, and to consider overlooked groups of victims, including male victims.

Existing literature

Gender and forms of trafficking

Most policy reports and academic literature on gender and THB look primarily at sexual exploitation of women and girls. For example, in view of “developing knowledge on the gender dimensions of human trafficking, including the gender consequences of the various forms of trafficking and potential differences in the vulnerability of men and women to victimization and its impact on them”, the 2016 EU study Gender dimension of THB specifically focused on trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.⁴⁰ While recognizing the crime as one affecting both men and women, as well as the need to address the gender dimension by taking into account the potential of different vulnerability factors for different genders, the report emphasized the female gender dimension of sexual exploitation. According to EU data, 60% of victims detected in the EU have been trafficked for sexual exploitation, and 92% of these victims are women and girls. Moreover, more than 70% of traffickers are men, which reflects how trafficking for sexual exploitation is rooted in gender inequality.⁴¹ Since 2008, sexual exploitation has been the most prevalent and reported form of trafficking in the EU. For this reason, the 2018 European Institute for Gender Equality report on gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking action provided a thorough analysis of preventative and protection strategies focusing specifically on sexual exploitation and female victims.⁴²

While THB is most often associated with sexual exploitation of women and children, since that is the most identified and understood form of trafficking, the Palermo Protocol lists additional forms of trafficking, including forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs⁴³ Available literature on gender and THB shows that little attention has been given to other forms of trafficking endured by women and girls, such as domestic servitude, labour exploitation, or forced marriage. To highlight gender-related challenges, the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA)⁴⁴ and the OSCE⁴⁵ have analysed cases of both male and female victims of labour exploitation. However, there is still little information about gender dynamics in this regard, or the diversity of needs of victims of labour exploitation and other forms of trafficking. A 2008 ILO study on forced labour has focused on factors contributing to the susceptibility of ending up in exploitative labour, and while gender discrimination is mentioned as a vulnerability that intersects with poverty as a push factor, this dimension is not elaborated further.⁴⁶ Similarly, in OSCE publications on labour migration policies⁴⁷ and domestic servitude⁴⁸, the persistent lack of data has led to limited attention being given to the full spectrum of gender aspects and scarce guidance on how to apply comprehensive gender-sensitive approaches. The OSCE report *THB for the Purpose of Organ Removal* also acknowledged that due to the scarcity of data, gender issues related to this form of trafficking remained unclear.⁴⁹

Consequences of selective attention to gender aspects

Research both informs and is informed by policy development and assistance work. Thus, research that overlooks certain victim groups as a result of gender assumptions – or limits certain forms of trafficking to one gender group – can have an effect on how anti-trafficking action advances. The lack of a comprehensive view of the gender aspects of all types of trafficking limits the understanding of who victims are, as well as what their relative vulnerabilities and needs may be. This hinders the development not only of assistance and protection strategies, but also of prevention mechanisms. While it is recognized that victims have various profiles, certain groups, such as men and boys in sexual exploitation, or other persons who do not fit the profile of *ideal victim*, are often neglected and rarely included in the anti-trafficking discourse.

There is also concern that a growing link is forming between the lack of knowledge and the lack of detection. Lack of attention to certain gender issues means that those issues are unlikely to be detected or addressed, and therefore are unlikely to be considered a problem deserving further attention. As an example, in 2010 the International Organization for Migration (IOM) conducted the study *Causes and Consequences of Re-Trafficking: Evidence from the IOM Human Trafficking Database*. At the time this study was conducted, the IOM Human Trafficking Database contained a total of 80 re-trafficking cases, of which 79 were female victims. Considering that the representation of

male re-trafficking cases was so small (one case), the gender aspect of re-trafficking could not be adequately addressed and the report only focused on the 79 cases of re-trafficked women. The report concluded that women were traditionally more likely to be identified as trafficked persons, and were more likely than men to be trafficked a second time. Nonetheless, the report does mention the cautionary note that men may be more reluctant than women to seek assistance, and thus that they may be underrepresented in the IOM database.⁵⁰ In another example, a report from the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC), *Evidential Issues in Trafficking in Persons Cases – Case Digest*, highlighted gender among vulnerability factors. Although the majority of cases involved female victims and only a very small number of male victims, it was concluded that attention should also be given to the exploitation of men.⁵¹

This shortage of attention towards certain gender aspects, compounded with stereotyped association of a gender with one form of trafficking, may impact the design of prevention and detection strategies.

Methodology of the study

The paper pulls together the voices of survivors, anti-trafficking experts, service providers and law enforcement to provide a more elaborate account of the gender dimension of THB and support the application of gender-sensitive approaches as per the OSCE commitments. The Study on which it is based involved multi-method research including surveys, interviews and expert group meetings, and an analysis of existing literature on the topic of THB and gender.

Surveys, interviews and expert group discussions

The data collection process was led by three external consultants between November 2019 and May 2020 and resulted in 159 completed surveys, 12 interviews and 3 expert group meetings. The survey was disseminated through various anti-trafficking networks, with the intent to gain an understanding of gender and THB in the OSCE region, and to inform the interviews and expert group discussions.

- Participants from 36 of the 57 OSCE participating States contributed to the Study;
- Half of the 159 survey participants (82) were direct service providers for victims and survivors of trafficking; academic researchers, policymakers, representatives of international organizations, attorneys and law enforcement officials also featured among the respondents;
- 45% of the survey participants served or did research primarily on sex trafficking victims and survivors;
- 22% worked with victims of all forms of trafficking;
- 12% assisted most often labour trafficking victims;
- 10% dealt with sex traffickers and 5% with labour traffickers;
- 32% stated that they worked mostly with child victims and survivors.

Despite this diversity, the sample was limited since it did not provide an equal representation of all OSCE participating States. Half of the survey data was from participants in Serbia (26%) and the United States (24%). Other countries substantially represented were the Netherlands (8%), Bosnia and Herzegovina (5%), Ukraine (4%), Sweden (4%) and Finland (4%). The remaining respondents to the survey were from: Armenia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania, the Russian Federation, Slovenia, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. Data from Kosovo were also collected.⁵²

A total of 12 semi-structured interviews with anti-trafficking experts, law enforcement, service providers, and survivors of THB were conducted in Italy, Greece, Romania, Serbia and the United States. A total of 3 expert group meetings were held with anti-trafficking experts and service providers. The participants in the expert group meetings represented or had expertise in the following OSCE participating States: Bosnia and Herzegovina, Denmark, Finland, Georgia, Germany, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Montenegro, The Netherlands, North Macedonia, the Russian Federation, Sweden, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. This brought further geographical diversity to the survey sample.

The interview and expert group participants represented four groups of anti-trafficking actors, defined as follows:

- Service providers: individuals who assist victims directly, such as representatives of NGOs, medical workers, lawyers, social workers;
- Criminal justice practitioners: individuals who work for an agency that enforces the law (i.e. police, prosecutors, judges);
- Experts: individuals who possess advanced knowledge of THB but do not directly work with or assist victims of trafficking, such as policy makers, academics, independent consultants and experts, advisors, specialists;
- Survivors: individuals who have been subjected to violations that constitute THB. Many of the participants in this category are also involved in providing direct services to victims and are experts as defined above.

Table 1: Number of participants in expert group discussions and interviews

	Experts	Service providers	Survivors	Criminal justice practitioners
Interviews	7*	6**	7***	2
Expert group meetings	6	4	–	–

As explained above, the categories are not mutually exclusive, since some participants held more than one role:

* 5 of the individuals in this category also identified as survivors and direct service providers;

** 5 of the individuals in this category also identified as survivors and experts;

*** 5 of the individuals in this category also identified as experts and direct service providers.

The qualitative data collected through the methods described above are analysed in the chapters to follow. Despite some geographical concentrations, the findings set forth in this paper provide important insights into both challenges and promising practices when applying gender-sensitive approaches to combating THB.

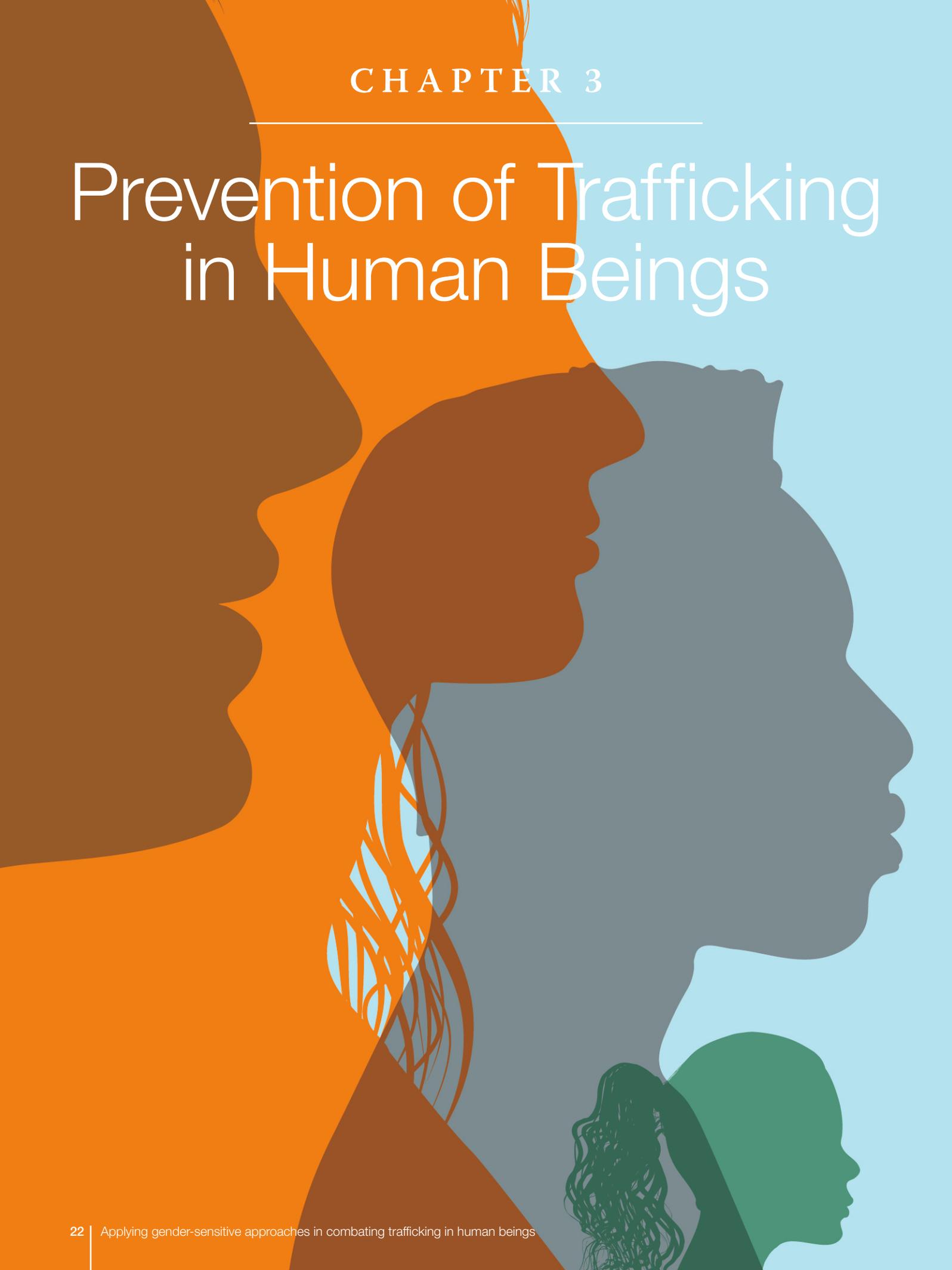
Structure of the paper

This paper aims to explore the scope of gender aspects inherent to the crime of THB and the response to it, as represented by the 3P paradigm set out in the Palermo Protocol and in the 2003 OSCE Action Plan to Combat THB: the three pillars of prevention, protection and prosecution. It aims to widen knowledge about THB by introducing less well-known gender aspects in addition to those that are already well studied.

In the following chapters, gender-sensitive approaches to combating THB are identified and examined with regard to how they can be applied. The material that has been gathered is synthesized from the perspective of the above 3P paradigm, which represents a fundamental framework to assist governments and anti-trafficking organizations to develop and implement effective responses to THB.

Based on this architecture, Chapter 3: “Prevention of THB” provides an analysis of gender-related risk factors, gender perceptions of anti-trafficking actors involved in preventative measures, and gender-sensitive prevention strategies. Chapter 4: “Protection of Victims of THB” discusses gender aspects of victim identification and assistance. When examining the element of protection, not only is the gender of victims taken into account, but also the gender of service providers. Chapter 5: “Prosecution of THB” looks at the gendered interactions between victim, trafficker and criminal justice professionals. The paper closes with Chapter 6: “Conclusions and Recommendations” which highlights key areas requiring further action.

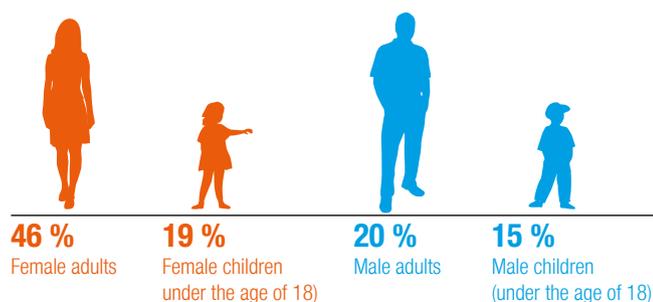
Prevention of Trafficking in Human Beings



In order to better understand how and why participating States should apply gender-sensitive approaches to prevention programming, it is important to explore how gender is intertwined with the identification of various prevention needs. This chapter aims to unravel gender-related risk factors that heighten the vulnerability not only of women and girls, but also of men and boys to trafficking. It also examines the consequences of gender biases and stereotyping in preventive work, and discusses key prevention strategies through a gender-sensitive lens.

Gender-related vulnerability factors

Awareness of the factors that increase victims' vulnerability to trafficking is central in developing and implementing prevention measures. According to the Study's survey data, risk factors for trafficking victimization vary across gender and age. Girls were reported as being more vulnerable to being trafficked based on their gender if they had been in foster care or had a history of being subjected to sexual violence. Also women were at risk for being trafficked based on their gender if they had a history of experiencing sexual violence. Participants also reported poverty and financial instability as a risk factor, for both women and men. Boys were reportedly at risk for trafficking victimization if they were homeless, were in foster care, or had experienced chaotic home or family life. Some of the professionals who were interviewed also noted that the absence of a father figure increased boys' vulnerability of being trafficked as traffickers seek to fill the void of a male role model. Finally, men were perceived as being at risk if they were disabled or had drug or alcohol dependencies. Expert group discussions and in-depth interviews carried out in the context of the Study also revealed three overarching themes that play an important role in understanding gender aspects when attempting to prevent THB: structural gender-based inequalities, culture-specific intersectional push factors, and patriarchal societal structures.



Source: Shares of detected victims of trafficking in persons, by age group and sex, 2018 (or most recent). UNODC Global report on trafficking in persons 2020

Gender inequalities

Gender-based discrimination due to structural barriers and pervasive inequalities that persist throughout the OSCE region is a significant contributing factor to the susceptibility of women and girls to trafficking. For example, full access for women to the job market is prevented by unequal access to education and training, discrimination in recruitment, and unequal burdens of household and childcare responsibilities.⁵³ As a result of such gender inequalities, the socio-economic and legal status of women and girls is lower in comparison to that enjoyed by men and boys.⁵⁴ For this reason, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) has recommended that States strengthen public services in areas that support the achievement of gender equality, promote the human rights of women and girls, and support sustainable development in order to reduce the risk of factors leading to trafficking.⁵⁵ This complements the OSCE commitments mentioned above (chapter 1), which are aimed at tackling discrimination and providing equal opportunities for women with a view to reducing their vulnerability to trafficking.

Globally, women make up 70% of workers in the health and social sector.⁵⁶ These professions are some of the most undervalued and underpaid jobs in the world.⁵⁷ Migrant women are particularly at risk of economic hardship in sectors categorized as “low-skilled”, such as care, domestic services and manufacturing, where gender stereotypes about what constitutes so-called “women’s work” prevail. According to CEDAW, such gender-segregated labour markets “do not offer decent and safe working conditions, because they are either part of the unregulated informal economy or, where regulated, they provide fewer protections than sectors meeting national standards.”⁵⁸ Compared to men, women are notably more represented in economic sectors more harshly hit by the economic consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic.⁵⁹ Research undertaken by the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) also suggests that addressing economic inequalities resulting from gender discrimination may be the best protection against the deceptive strategies of traffickers.⁶⁰

In addition to gender discrimination in the economic and social sphere, exposure to domestic violence and other forms of violence against women, especially in conflict settings and in light of the impact of the global Covid-19 pandemic, contributes to the vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking. Violence causes increased isolation as well as forced displacement from homes.⁶¹ In this regard, the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, highlighted in her report to the General Assembly that “women and girls are disproportionately affected in conflict and post-conflict settings, owing to pre-existing marginalization and economic dependency and gender-based violence stemming from patriarchal social norms, including limited access to resources and education, gender discrimination and sexual and domestic violence.”⁶² CEDAW has added that “trafficking in women and girls is exacerbated during and after conflict and humanitarian emergencies owing to displacement, the breakdown of political, economic and social structures, instability and insufficient governance, including the absence of the rule of law, increased militarism, the availability of small arms, weakening or loosening community and family ties, high incidence of widowhood and the ‘normalization’ of gender-based violence, including conflict-related sexual violence, as an aggravating factor of pre-existing structural gender discrimination against women and girls.”⁶³

It is evident that gender discrimination and gender-based violence disproportionately affect women and girls, thus increasing their vulnerability to trafficking. But gender inequality grounded in gender biases and stereotyping has a socio-economic impact on society as a whole. Harmful notions of masculinity negatively impact men and boys as well.⁶⁴ Economic insecurity of households in which men traditionally play a crucial breadwinner role, especially in times of crises, is a major risk factor for men being susceptible to becoming victims of trafficking, most notably for the purpose of forced labour, forced criminality or organ removal. The susceptibility of male victims to being trafficked is greatly enhanced within societies where pressure exists to be a provider and an ego-driven sense of masculinity prohibits disclosure of exploitation.

“ Men are trained to be workhorses, to take the brunt of the work, do the work, bring home the bread, that’s your job. Women are trained to use their sexuality to create a family too, to bring in their partner. There is no way that there can’t be some [gendered] component there. Human trafficking across the board needs to be addressed no matter what gender you are.”

Survivor of trafficking in the USA

In instances of economic hardship in households where women play the breadwinner role, the women wage earners are similarly susceptible to entering precarious employment that can lead to exploitation. This underscores the importance of taking the full spectrum of risk factors into account when developing prevention measures to combat THB.

Intersectionality

Men and women are not exposed to the same THB risks to the same extent. Their vulnerability is subject to various intersecting factors, such as age, nationality, ethnicity and socio-economic status. In order to inform THB prevention efforts, it is crucial not only to recognize the gendered nature of specific forms of exploitation, but also intersectional factors such as belonging to a minority group, economic insecurity, and gendered cultural practices and traditions.

The intersectionality between gender-related and other risk factors is especially relevant with regard to national and ethnic minorities. Marginalization and discrimination against these minorities are clear vulnerability factors that can lead to trafficking. In the context of the Study, an anti-trafficking expert in Germany explained that people in certain ethnic groups are sometimes involved in trafficking their own family members. The combination of structural and intersecting forms of ethnic and gender discrimination, poverty and social exclusion must be taken into account to understand the push factors behind the decision to sell a family member into exploitation.⁶⁵

Some forms of THB such as trafficking for the purpose of organ removal are grounded in economic insecurity and lack of education.⁶⁶ While this form of exploitation is still poorly understood, nonetheless a few gender-specific aspects have been identified.⁶⁷ Statistics suggest that the vast majority of identified victims of trafficking for the purpose of organ removal are adult men.⁶⁸ Cases have been reported of men resorting to selling a kidney due to the lack of other economic opportunities, especially in patriarchal societies that require men to do all they can to provide for their family. But women are also targeted for organ removal for gendered reasons, such as the removal of gender-specific tissues and cells.⁶⁹ There are also cases of female victims of trafficking for the purpose of organ removal that are not related to the need for survival, but are due to deeply engrained cultural factors. A case in India was explained by one of the Study participants as follows:

“For example, in India, oftentimes the mothers of brides have to sell their kidneys to allow them to give the woman a better start into the marriage like a dowry. [...] Organ traffickers came in and realized they could use that [the dowry practice] as quite a good market. So that’s also again a highly gendered [type of] victimization, because it is usually the mothers of the brides who have to do it.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Germany

Study participants also noted the importance of harmful cultural practices that can be push factors leading to trafficking situations. Examples are forced marriages, which usually affect young women and girls, and the phenomenon in Afghanistan of *bacha bazi* (dancing boys), which involves the sexual abuse of young men and boys.⁷⁰ These practices exemplify the intersectional character of gender and age factors that contribute to child trafficking.

Patriarchy

In addition to pervasive forms of gender inequality and intersectional factors, the Study found that patriarchy plays a crucial role in making the systemic exploitation of women and girls possible. Gender-based inequalities throughout various social strata in different parts of the world produce vulnerabilities that make women and girls susceptible to trafficking for labour or sexual exploitation. The societal gender norms upon which existing gender inequalities are based further contribute to the gendered nature of trafficking.

“Girls or young women in a patriarchal system have less alternatives, less say on what they will do with their future. It’s a very vicious circle. And they are so vulnerable for re-trafficking.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Sweden

“Women are taught at a young age to be respectful. I personally was taught that my body was what gave me any semblance of power, when in fact it really did not. I was taught that it was where my value was. I grew up in a very strict Christian non-denominational home where the Bible was used against me in my abuse, that I was to be the baby factory. That was my worth, which then also tied into the sexuality piece: My body is where my worth is placed.”

Survivor of trafficking in the USA

Women and girls suffer disproportionately from objectification and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. However, it is not only women and girls who suffer as victims of gender-based inequalities; men and boys are also affected by societal notions grounded in patriarchal systems. As noted by a service provider in Serbia, gender-related risk factors apply to all of the victims they have worked with, with slight differences in intensity. For example, having been instructed to be the breadwinner of the family, men and boys are at risk of entering precarious employment circumstances and becoming victims of exploitation.

“ The history of sexual violence relates mostly to girls as being at risk for human trafficking. With boys, patriarchy, as a risk factor, instructs them that they must, at all costs, provide a livelihood for their families; their traditional role puts them at the risk of becoming victims of labour exploitation. Their role as a provider may be an obstacle to risk detection.”

Service provider in Serbia

Moreover, there are gender-specific factors that put certain social groups at risk of exploitation, despite these groups not necessarily being considered vulnerable. For example, migrant boys and young men crossing the Mediterranean to Europe are vulnerable for multiple reasons, including gender stereotyping and patriarchal expectations: they are seen as being able to handle the dangerous trip, and they have inherited the role of income provider in their families.⁷¹

“ It’s mainly the strongest boys of the family coming over [crossing the Mediterranean to Europe]. They are two or three times as vulnerable because they have been pushed out by their family. It’s not always so visible. No one tells them to go to Europe. It might happen in some cases, but it’s normally like an invisible push: “Out with you. You should take care of the family’s finances. And do as you please. We are not interfering in how you get the money. You just have to get the money.” And when you are twelve years old, that’s not very easy.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Sweden

Because of patriarchal expectations regarding work and gender, young men and boys are often under pressure to provide for their families. They are also more likely to be left unsupervised in situations that would be considered too risky for girls, despite these situations making them equally at-risk of abuse.

Recent research has shown that although migrant boys and young men are particularly at risk of being trafficked for sexual exploitation, due to social-cultural norms this risk is deemed lower than that of girls. Consequently, limited attention is given to such abuse of boys and young men.⁷²

Sexual violence against men and boys should also be considered gender-based violence, since perpetrators use violence and harmful masculinities to denigrate their victims and violate their dignity⁷³. This is particularly relevant for individuals born male who do not conform to socially constructed norms, attitudes, and behaviours traditionally associated with manhood. The findings of the Study’s interviews as well as recent research⁷⁴ confirm that young adults who do not align themselves with traditional gender roles are particularly vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation. This is due to higher rates of homelessness compared to the general population,⁷⁵ marginalization from their families, violence, and economic insecurity stemming from systemic discrimination and persecution.⁷⁶

“ There’s not any messaging about trafficking impacting queer and trans communities (...). If we’re dehumanizing people, and we’re not giving them means to survive, there’s always going to be someone – as long as people don’t have another way of securing housing and food – there’s always going to be someone paying for sex. The only way we can abolish the sex trade is if we reduce marginalization significantly to the point where no one ever has to trade sex for food or shelter.”

Survivor of trafficking and service provider in the USA

Manifestations of gender biases in preventive work

This section outlines ways in which societal gender attitudes and biases manifest in THB prevention policies and measures. This in turn hinders the above-mentioned gender-related vulnerability factors from being adequately addressed.

Invisible women

Women and girls have a heightened vulnerability to being trafficked. Nonetheless, several participants of the Study reported that the stereotypical and gender-biased construct of the *ideal victim* impedes preventive efforts to combat types of THB that are less visible.

“ Currently, the way that we are addressing human trafficking is a pre-set system of biases where we’re walking in the door to rescue women and girls.”

Survivor of trafficking and service provider in the USA

Domestic work is a highly female-dominated sector, with women representing 83% of all domestic workers worldwide.⁷⁷ However, due to the private and isolated nature of domestic work, it is difficult for authorities to detect domestic servitude. The mandate of labour inspectors often does not extend to private households. As a result, government policies often overlook exploitation of this type and fail to provide anti-trafficking actors with the necessary knowledge and tools to adequately prevent forced labour in domestic environments. The Covid-19 crisis has also further affected workers in this often underestimated and under-protected sector, since it has restricted movement and limited outside interaction.

As another example, the UNODC has reported that forced marriage can be considered trafficking recruitment when it is “used as an instrument to bring a spouse to the destination country where she or he will be exploited either sexually, in domestic servitude or in forced labour”.⁷⁸ Research suggests that trafficking of girls for forced marriage is highly dependent on the income of a girl’s parent’s household, since marriage is often perceived as a way for generating income and assets, while

reducing the costs associated with raising a daughter.⁷⁹ In some cultures, the practice is used as a family survival strategy, with dowry or bride-price arrangements being made between families. In this regard, the UN Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) and Committee on the Rights of the Child (CRC) issued a joint recommendation in which temporary marriage in exchange for financial gain, also referred to as a contractual marriage, is recognized as a form of THB.⁸⁰ Most recently, CEDAW recommended State parties to “eradicate patriarchal norms and values formalized in legislation, including family laws, which facilitate trafficking for child/early and forced marriage. Measures must be adopted which prevent families from agreeing to the indefinite or temporary ‘marriage’ of their daughter in exchange for financial gains.”⁸¹

In some countries, the definition of THB is quite broad and includes explicit references to forced marriage or bride kidnapping. For example, Article 106 of Croatia’s Criminal Code not only covers the exploitative purposes for THB listed in the Palermo Protocol, but also THB for the purpose of contracting an illicit or forced marriage.⁸² Also the Austrian Criminal Code of 2016 criminalizes forced marriage, defining it as “any person who coerces another one into entering a marriage or registered partnership by using force or dangerous threat or by threatening to sever or deprive a person of family contact” (Article 106a).⁸³ Cyprus’ Criminal Code includes provisions that complement the Anti-trafficking Law and criminalizes forced marriage (Article 150).⁸⁴ In Kyrgyzstan, legislation against bride kidnapping was toughened with the adoption of a new criminal code in 2017. In the first six months following the entry into force of this new criminal code in 2019, 118 criminal cases of bride kidnapping were opened in Kyrgyzstan, each with potential punishment ranging from 5 to 10 years in prison.⁸⁵

With regard to THB prevention, it is important that situations of forced marriage, bride kidnapping or domestic servitude are not disregarded as private or family matters. Gender-specific strategies should be developed to address inequalities between women and men and gender-based violence because such factors create thriving conditions for forced, abusive and exploitative relationships.⁸⁶

Forgotten men

Gender bias and stereotyping also hinder the development of appropriate prevention policies to address the growing number of male victims of trafficking.⁸⁷ It has been estimated by the UNODC that the proportion of detected male victims has increased worldwide from 16% in 2004 to 35% in 2018, and up to 49% in Western and Southern Europe.⁸⁸ Whilst the vast majority of identified male victims are victims of exploitation for the purpose of forced labour, it has increasingly been acknowledged that men are vulnerable to many forms of trafficking, including sexual exploitation. Most recently, UNODC global data has indicated that amongst detected male victims of trafficking, 17% of the men and 23% of the boys had been trafficked for sexual exploitation.⁸⁹ National reports from the United Kingdom also show that of 671 possible child victims of sexual exploitation identified by the UK Human Trafficking Centre in 2014, almost half were boys.⁹⁰ A study by Leon and Raws also highlighted that boys were seen by traffickers as being more versatile and were therefore exploited in a variety of settings, through forced labour, forced criminality or domestic servitude.⁹¹ Sexual exploitation and sexual violence against men and boys is sometimes used in conjunction with other forms of trafficking, as an additional way to maximise the income traffickers can make out of their victims, or as a control or punishment mechanism. Moreover, although forced marriage primarily affects women and girls (75%), official data from 2018 show that 18% of identified victims of forced marriage in the United Kingdom were men.⁹²

A prominent example of non-conventional and under-reported victim profiles discussed amongst the experts involved in the Study is the phenomenon of *bacha bazi* (dancing boys).⁹³ While perpetrators often enjoy impunity, victims face social stigma, shame, and fear of prosecution for adultery, homosexuality or prostitution.⁹⁴ Although poverty and migration are major driving forces behind *bacha bazi*, gender dynamics characterized by sex segregation and societal male dominance are also important contributing factors that need to be addressed. According to an anti-trafficking expert in Finland, awareness of this specific form of exploitation is very low, as is awareness of sexual exploitation of men and boys in general. Consequently, preventative measures to address crimes targeting young men and boys are lacking in many places, whether countries of origin, transit or destination.

A victim service provider in Serbia emphasized the need to employ a gender-sensitive approach in preventing THB along migration routes for similar reasons. Migrant boys are often overlooked as potential victims of trafficking. In examining vulnerable groups in migration processes, taking gender into account is necessary, not only with regard to exploitation risk factors involving country-specific practices and events, but also further exploitation risks in countries of destination.

“ How poorly many countries are prepared when they suddenly get cases with 25 men, and it almost explodes in your hands because you don't know what to do with them and where to place them.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Denmark

Gender-sensitive prevention strategies

Survey respondents were asked if their organizations had launched any gender-specific campaigns in the areas of prevention, protection or prosecution. Over a third of the sample (37%) had carried out a gender-specific prevention campaign: 11% in protection, and 29% in all three areas. Notably, no organizations had launched a gender-awareness campaign specific to prosecution.

The vast majority of the survey respondents (90%) also stated that to end THB, addressing the demand for forced labour or sexual exploitation was very or extremely important. When asked how gender played a role in creating the demand for trafficking in their region, participants often discussed the gendered dynamics in the context of sexual exploitation. One participant highlighted that “female victims have experienced more than one type of exploitation and even in the cases of labour exploitation there is usually a sexual exploitation aspect. Migrant women and girls are exploited due to their immigration status, and recruited through romantic relationships. As we see it, THB of women and girls is highly interlinked with other forms of VAWG [violence against women and girls], inequality, and as well racism.” Another respondent underlined that “since the trafficker is looking for somebody who is vulnerable, they will prey on any gender where they see an opportunity to exploit. Homeless boys and girls are huge targets. Adult females and males with chronic mental health issues are also targets. There is much more of a demand for females regardless of whether trans [transgender] or not.”

Education and awareness

According to the Study participants, education and awareness-raising are key in preventive anti-trafficking efforts. Firstly, it is important to understand how physical attributes that are perceived as feminine or masculine can make a person a target for trafficking. For instance, labour traffickers often believe that women’s and children’s small hands and nimble fingers are better suited for certain manufacturing and agricultural work, such as plucking tea leaves in tea plantations.⁹⁵ In other sectors, physical characteristics can also be significant. Small boys are exploited as horse or camel jockeys, because the less the jockey weighs, the faster the animal runs.⁹⁶ Another example is the exploitation of young girls as contortionists for entertainment.⁹⁷ In the construction sector, there is a need for physically strong workers, which often manifests in men being targeted and recruited.⁹⁸ There are various types of gender specificities in trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation. Greater awareness-raising and targeted programmes are needed for recognising men and boys as potential victims, but also recognising women and girls in sectors where they are at great risk of exploitation.

In addition to the gender dimension of vulnerability factors, it is important to understand that there are gender dimensions with regard to the demand fuelling THB. When discussing demand, the Survey respondents referred to traditional gender roles as impacting how men perceive their right to have access to the bodies of women and girls. “We see identified sex buyers in our research and region being 100% male, and roughly 99% of identified victims being female; the 1% of identified victims that are male or consider themselves non-binary is increasing due to ongoing training.” In trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, the demand for sexual services – overwhelmingly from men – is grounded in persistent norms and stereotypes regarding male domination, the need to assert male control or power, and sexual entitlement.⁹⁹ One survey respondent noted: “Regarding sex trafficking – it’s critical to examine and compare the racial and gender disparities among survivors vs. that of buyers/those creating demand. This is a highly gendered issue because it is male-driven demand originating from a deep sense of male entitlement.”

Female sex offenders have also received growing attention, particularly in the context of sexual exploitation of boys and young men.¹⁰⁰ Studies report European female offenders travelling to tourist destinations in African, Latin American and Asian countries to pursue paid sex with young people, notably with so-called “beach boys”, “island boys”, “players”, or “gigolos”. Although not all instances constitute THB, this phenomenon creates risks of exploitation and trafficking. These young people “often do not self-identify as being actually involved in commercial sexual exploitation and may rather see their sexual engagement as an assertion of their masculinity”.¹⁰¹ A Study participant noted that “the demand for sex trafficking lies mostly on the side of men – however, female buyers are usually not addressed at all, which is also a shortcoming.”

In line with the OSCE Ministerial Council Decision No. 7/14 on Preventing and combating violence against women, efforts must be strengthened to “reach out to the public through public awareness and sensitization activities, in order to address negative stereotypes, attitudes, and prejudices which contribute to all forms of violence against women”.¹⁰² In this regard, Spain, for example, launched targeted public campaigns against the trafficking of women for sex.¹⁰³

The Ministerial Council Decision No. 7/14 also highlights the need to establish “appropriate measures to increase the engagement and participation of men and boys in the prevention and elimination of all forms of violence against women, including sexual and domestic violence” as well as to “take measures to raise awareness of the vicious cycle of violence that might

emanate from physical, sexual, and psychological violence experienced in childhood and adolescence.”¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the OSCE Ministerial Decision No. 4/18 on Preventing and Combating Violence against Women underlines “the importance of actively engaging men and boys in efforts towards elimination of discrimination and all forms of violence against women and girls, including by addressing the root causes of gender inequality and violence and by raising awareness about the impact of negative attitudes, behaviours and gender stereotypes that can underlie and perpetuate discrimination and violence.”¹⁰⁵ More specifically, the OSCE Ministerial Council recommends initiatives “to promote the engagement of men and boys in preventing and combating violence against women and girls, including by implementing awareness-raising activities focusing on the positive, equitable and non-violent roles men and boys can play in this regard, and by recognizing and addressing negative attitudes, behaviours and gender stereotypes that perpetuate such violence.”¹⁰⁶

In this regard, training events focusing on comprehensive sexuality have been given in Greece for both teachers and students. Here the importance of healthy masculinity was highlighted as a means for preventing trafficking for sexual exploitation.¹⁰⁷ Another example of a prevention strategy is the KAST project (*Köpare av Sexuella Tjänster*, in English “Buyers of Sexual Services”) in Sweden and Norway, which by educating buyers of sex, mostly men but also a few women, seeks to decelerate the practice.¹⁰⁸ Attendance, however, is voluntary, which limits the programme’s impact, since buyers of sex may be reticent or have no incentive to participate.¹⁰⁹

Despite the strong encouragement to governments to develop gender-sensitive awareness-raising strategies, societal aversion to sex education in many parts of the world continues to impede the development of primary prevention programmes in schools that foster body-positive and gender bias-free mindsets. For example, a survivor from the United States highlighted in the Study how important simple lessons on personal boundaries are to healthy relationships between people:

“ Prevention starts in the schools with the children, helping them to understand safe boundaries, and to be able to respect the boundaries of other people.”

Survivor of trafficking in the USA

A school trafficking prevention programme does not necessarily require educators or trainers to explain the manipulative or coercive tactics used by traffickers. Rather, such programmes might lay the groundwork for pupils to find self-worth and self-esteem, something the above survivor felt lacking in her own schooling and which led to her trafficking situation.

Voices of victims and survivors

The OSCE Ministerial Council decisions No. 6/17 and No. 6/18 highlight “the importance of the voice of victims of human trafficking in elaborating effective anti-trafficking strategies.”¹¹⁰ The Study also found that integrating these voices in anti-trafficking training and education is of paramount importance, not only for being able to identify victims and provide them assistance, but also in efforts to raise awareness and diminish demand of all forms of exploitation and THB. According to several experts who participated in the Study, including a survivor in the daily operations of an organization makes awareness a regular part of that organization’s operational plan. This approach is more impactful than one-time or once-a-year training events. The meaningful inclusion of survivors can be significantly more effective in making sure that the prevention messaging is targeted to at-risk groups, particularly when it comes to the gendered nature of trafficking victimization.

“ When I walk into the room, right away I say I'm not a social worker. And so I will say 'I'm a survivor.' I say I'm a survivor of a lot of forms of abuse, including sexual abuse and sex trafficking. And a lot of times you see them just breathe out really deep and say 'You are?'”

Survivor of trafficking and service provider in the USA

Diversity and inclusiveness

Recognizing the heightened risk of women and girls to THB, the Study participants noted that existing prevention policies needed to be further tailored to address women and girls' needs more comprehensively. When asked what they or their organizations could improve to better recognize the role played by gender in trafficking, respondents also discussed broadening the lens to be more inclusive, notably through "more prevention campaigns targeting men as producers of demand" as well as through "a focus on the special needs of men and boys, who are often neglected and not thought to have special needs".

The Study respondents emphasized the importance of targeted campaigns to present diverse and wide-ranging message framing. If a trafficked person sees a billboard featuring someone in shackles or tied up and that has not been their experience, they might not associate what is happening to them as trafficking. One survey respondent added: "We need to change the posters, not using a simple little white girl, but women of colour. We have surpassed the 1900s of white slavery—human trafficking ideology." A harmful hierarchy of victimhood based on the

paradigm of the *ideal victim* contributes to excluding groups of potential victims who are less visible. The framing therefore needs to be more inclusive and include different types of exploitation, different genders, races, ethnicities, and also the languages that potential trafficking victims speak.

“ We have a hard enough time getting cis-straight¹¹¹ people to understand that trafficking is a problem, and yes we've made progress there, but there is not any messaging really about trafficking impacting queer and trans communities, which means these communities don't identify as being trafficked, which means there are fewer voices to put in the messaging, which means ... it's like a feedback loop.”

Survivor of trafficking and service provider in the USA

ADVOCATING GENDER-SENSITIVE PREVENTION through the OSCE Special Representative's country visits

During several country visits to OSCE participating States, the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating THB has addressed gender-specific challenges, recommendations and guidance regarding certain matters. This has included recommendations to address less visible cases of trafficking, including preventive measures against domestic servitude. In this specific case, the Special Representative has urged authorities in the visited countries to review and consider amending the legal framework and policies that create conducive environments for the exploitation of domestic workers. It has also been recommended to enhance the focus on trafficking and exploitation of foreign women for the purpose of domestic servitude by regulating and monitoring recruitment mechanisms for domestic workers and their working conditions to prevent abuses and exploitation.¹¹²

Other gender-specific recommendations on prevention included countering the demand that fosters trafficking by adopting appropriate legislative, educational, cultural and social measures. Also to discourage demand, it was recommended to closely monitor places and websites offering prostitution services to prevent the exploitation of foreign and local women and children. On several occasions, the Special Representative noted with concern several factors that contribute to increased internal trafficking, such as the lack of decent work opportunities, forced return of labour migrants from other countries, and the lack of women's access to education and employment. In this regard, it was recommended to develop a comprehensive prevention strategy that focuses on empowering and sensitizing at-risk populations, particularly those seeking employment; empowering families in difficult economic situations to prevent their children from becoming involved in labour exploitation; and increasing awareness among girls and single or left-behind women, who are often at risk of falling prey to sexual or labour exploitation.

The Special Representative also highlighted the need to identify and tackle gender-related vulnerability to trafficking, due for example to economic and gender inequality, as well as the need to enhance gender-sensitive training of anti-trafficking investigators, prosecutors and judges. In particular, the Special Representative put forward several recommendations to encourage targeted qualitative research into the features and trends of forced and early marriage, with a view to developing tailored responses, providing relief measures, and expanding the definition of THB to include forced marriage.

Protection of Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings

The protection of victims of trafficking requires a gender-sensitive approach. This is because victims of different genders are exploited in different ways and have different needs. Trafficked women and girls experience high rates of physical and sexual violence and require tailored victim support and empowerment measures. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, they have also encountered greater barriers in accessing protection services.¹¹³ The Inter-Agency Coordination Group against Trafficking in Persons (ICAT) Issue Brief on the Gender Dimensions of Human Trafficking also states that while THB disproportionately affects women and girls, there are various factors that contribute to the side-lining of male victims. Identifying and giving assistance to all victims is impeded by the uniqueness of male victims' experiences not being recognized, gender stereotyping when providing assistance and protection, and stereotyped constructions of masculinity. For instance, male victims need psychological support, medical assistance and healthcare that is different than that needed by female victims.

Gender determinants of (mis)identification

The act and process of protection of individuals who were formerly or are currently in an exploitative situation begins with their identification. The identification of a victim of trafficking is a crucial step that can make the difference between being offered assistance and access to justice, or being prosecuted.¹¹⁵ Unfortunately, recognizing individuals who have endured harm that amounts to THB is not always successful. In this regard, the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons has advocated a new identification model “that is centred on detecting the vulnerabilities of a person to trafficking and exploitation, based on personal circumstances and with the purpose of determining access to early support”. Expert consultations have highlighted that “the failure of the [existing identification] system is rooted in the fact that it is based on the singling out of those who are perceived as ‘real’ victims deserving of protection.”¹¹⁶

The image of the “ideal victim”

On several occasions, Study participants either used the term *ideal victim* or discussed prevailing images of trafficking victims as being an obstacle in the identification process. The needs of persons who do not fall within the perceived characteristics of trafficking victims are thus not met. Male or female victims of trafficking may not align with the *ideal victim* traits because of drug abuse or because they have committed petty crimes.¹¹⁷ The construction of the image of *ideal victim* through representations of THB in the media, political discourse, and the anti-trafficking legal framework can contribute to misidentification. Anti-trafficking actors are more likely to detect an *ideal victim*: typically female, possessing characteristics associated with notions of vulnerability, weakness and innocence. This type of victimhood is seen as the opposite of characteristics associated with masculinity, such as resilience, force and strength.¹¹⁸

“ I think it is a problem for a professional to see men and boys as victims in the first place. It’s always something else first. And then of course you can get to the point that you say ‘OK, they are victims’, by talking for example to people working directly with victims of human trafficking. And they always say ‘OK the “perfect victim” is a woman or a girl in prostitution. That is a real victim of human trafficking.’ [...] So, for example, boys being exploited in criminal activities are not seen as victims, not even by themselves, I would say. They have a hard time visualizing themselves as victims. [...] It takes a long time to identify them. It’s very complicated to identify boys in begging or criminal activities or in labour exploitation, if they’re not found together with some women. I think it’s one of the main issues that goes back to the profession: we as professionals need to talk about our prejudices and the biased environment we’re working in.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Sweden

Gender plays a crucial role in the construction of these social assumptions, which can explain why certain groups are more readily identified as victims than others. While the average duration of trafficking for female victims identified by the IOM is 1.8 years, male victims are trafficked for an average of 2.3 years.¹¹⁹ Research further indicates that adult males and boys acutely experience the harm of trafficking because of gender structures and pressures imposed on them. Men are also less likely to report trafficking.¹²⁰ Since it is often assumed that men always desire sex, in cases of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, men and boys are rarely perceived as victims, but rather as having agency and prostituting themselves by choice.¹²¹

While both male and female victims are affected by gender determinants in the context of protection, most issues discussed by the Study participants regarding misidentification and lack of assistance were raised vis-à-vis male victims, both minors and adults. A Study participant noted that boys and young men tend to disagree and protest, creating additional tensions with service providers. It is therefore important to be mindful of the distinctive behavioural characteristics of certain groups of victims, especially when it comes to the most vulnerable victim groups such as children and young adults. While this may seem to be an issue more broadly related to all children or teenagers, there are differences in the way boy and girl victims are viewed by authorities, or by organizations identifying victims and offering assistance. Brunovskis and Surtees¹²² state the following:

Boys in particular are too often seen through a prism of their sex/gender (i.e. male and, thus, strong and invulnerable) rather than their age/maturity (i.e. as a child in need of and with rights to protection). For instance, whereas it would raise concerns were a young woman or girl be traveling alone along the Balkan route, young men and (at least older) boys in the same situation seemingly did not raise the same level of concern or need for interventions of some front-line responders.

Several Study participants noted that misidentification not only comes from assistance providers, but also from the victims themselves. In some cases, men and boys have an especially hard time seeing themselves as victims. They fear stigmatization and loss of dignity by accepting victimhood status, which

in their view or in their culture, is considered more devastating than physical violence. The Study participants noted that men's reluctance to acknowledge that they have been trafficked and to identify themselves as victims might be related to stereotypical constructions of masculinity. The culture of men working and supporting their families is highly relevant and often results in self-misidentification. Even when male victims are deprived of their earnings or endure harsh exploitative conditions, they are working and that is how it will be seen by their families and their communities.¹²³ As highlighted in a study undertaken by the EU Agency for Fundamental Rights (FRA) on labour exploitation, "for some men, accepting the status of a crime victim conflicts with their gender role, which dictates that men should be 'strong' and 'in control' of their situation, rather than in need of support. This can add to the tendency of victims of labour exploitation to view themselves as economically successful despite the violations of their rights which they encounter."¹²⁴

To conclude, women or men not displaying the right characteristics to be considered having complete and legitimate victim status may obstruct or delay the provision of assistance. As raised earlier with regard to prevention, it is important to be mindful of intersectional aspects in the process of identification. In some instances, victim status is afforded to individuals not simply because of their gender, but because they display characteristics associated with innocence and helplessness, including age and ethnic or racial belonging.

“ How much is the display of victimhood gendered, especially in sex trafficking but also in human trafficking more generally? It is not only gender, but it's also an intersectional problem, where the victim is supposed to be white and young as well. So not only the male victims are being overlooked, but also the older female victims. Basically, anybody that doesn't maybe meet the standards of the ideal victim.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Germany

Gender determinants of victims' needs

Between victims and offenders

In addition to the bias created by the image of the *ideal victim*, a factor that hinders the identification process is the conduct of trafficking victims often falling in the grey area between the categories of victim and offender.¹²⁵ In such cases, the spotlight falls on the victims' criminal activity rather than the form(s) of exploitation they have been forced into. These include recurring cases with gendered characteristics, such as the exploitation of women in prostitution in countries where prostitution is illegal, the exploitation of young men working on illegal cannabis farms, or forced criminality. Despite indicators of trafficking, these individuals are often arrested and charged with criminal offences, with protection systems failing to identify them as victims of trafficking.¹²⁶

These scenarios highlight the need to adhere to the non-punishment principle. This principle is grounded in a rights-based framework and should be applied in a non-discriminatory, gender-sensitive and age-sensitive fashion to enable the particular circumstances and assistance needs of all victims to be recognized.¹²⁷ Instances in which individuals have been compelled to commit a crime as a result of being trafficked – whether crossing a border illegally, engaging in illegal prostitution or criminalized homosexual acts, selling drugs or begging – must not prevent these victims from getting access to assistance and justice.¹²⁸ Regardless of their gender, all victims should receive the protection they are entitled to. In practice, the lack of implementation of this principle as undermined by stereotypes of the *ideal victims* leads to misidentification and double victimization.¹²⁹ One Study participant highlighted this concern, particularly with regard to cases of boys trafficked for forced criminality.

“ When the person is a woman or a girl sexual exploitation protection measures are used. But if we have a boy exploited for forced criminality for example, then gender stereotypes prevail and protection measures are not available. This will also happen to an older woman because she does not fit the age stereotype.”

Service provider in Italy

Providing assistance to victims of trafficking requires an approach that addresses the victim's specific needs. Indeed, victims of trafficking face a variety of maltreatment, including but not limited to physical and sexual abuse, psychological trauma, coerced consumption of drugs and alcohol, occupational health risks, exposure to environmental hazards, emotional manipulation, depression, isolation, debt bondage, and legal insecurities, to name but a few. Access to the assistance and care actually needed by victims of trafficking is a very important and problematic matter. For example, many female victims are primarily offered assistance related to sexual health, although their needs often extend far beyond this. Conversely, medical attention should not be limited to victims of sexual exploitation. So it is critical to allocate resources for care that takes into account the consequences of trafficking for both sexual and non-sexual purposes and that corresponds to gender needs.

Obstacles to seeking and accepting assistance

Both male and female victims often encounter obstacles in seeking and accepting assistance. Providing support to victims of trafficking, in particular those trafficked for the purpose of labour exploitation, can be particularly challenging since victims might refuse assistance out of fear of losing their jobs and wages, or due to taking responsibility for what happened to them and not seeing themselves as victims.¹³¹ In a study by Brunovskis and Surtees, female victims indicated several reasons for declining assistance, including the difficulty to trust strangers as a result of the trauma caused by the harm they had endured.¹³² For male victims, declining assistance can be due to an overall rejection of victimhood, which is related to notions of male provider roles, guilt, shame, social stigma and the notion of masculinity being incompatible with victimhood. Victims also reject assistance when what they are offered is not what they actually need.

Scarcity of tailored assistance

Study participants highlighted the lack of resources needed to provide victims with tailored assistance that meets individual needs. Gaps include the lack of specialized shelters and gendered housing, limited availability of services in remote locations, as well as the lack of sustainable and long-term reintegration support for victims. The situation of women who have children can also be particularly challenging.

As noted by the Council of Europe's Group of Experts on Action against THB (GRETA), while the number of identified male victims of trafficking is increasing, assistance programmes tailored to the needs of male victims are scarce.¹³³ It further noted that "most assistance services, including shelters, are designed and tailored to the needs of female victims, in particular those subjected to sexual exploitation, but there is still a marked shortage of assistance projects for male victims of trafficking."¹³⁴ There are a few initiatives tailored to male victims that are worth highlighting. For example, the men's health centre MEN VIA has been providing support and assistance to male victims of trafficking in Austria since 2014, with the financial support of the Federal Ministry of Labour, Social Affairs and Consumer Protection. Similar initiatives are found in Luxembourg, where InfoMann delivers assistance for male victims of trafficking on behalf of the Ministry of Equal Opportunities. Their services include accommodation as well as psycho-social support. However, given the increasing number of male victims, the number of such initiatives is far too limited.

With regard to reintegration support, different gender-sensitive approaches have been explored, in particular to address the difficulty of reintegrating victims of trafficking into society according to their individual needs. For example, the NGO HERA (Her Equality Rights and Autonomy) works with female victims of trafficking to set up their own businesses to gain economic independence. HERA has trained more than 1,000 people in Central and Eastern Europe through its Entrepreneurship Training Programme and a network of businesswomen who act as mentors and share their professional knowledge.¹³⁵ Another example is the project Prevention of Human Trafficking in Ukraine through the Economic Empowerment of Vulnerable Persons, which has been implemented by the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Ukraine in co-operation with the Ministry of Social Policy of Ukraine.¹³⁶ Under this project, several initiatives were undertaken to promote equal rights and opportunities for male and female victims of THB. This included the social sewing enterprise Barvysta, which empowers women by offering them a chance to earn their living locally, as well as the Goodstock Civic Alliance, a social café-bakery that promotes equal rights and opportunities for both women and men and provides assistance to victims of THB and domestic violence.

Differential healthcare needs

Information on the physical and mental health implications of THB is very limited and focuses primarily on sexual exploitation.¹³⁷ Only a few studies mention the effects of non-sexual forms of exploitation on other aspects of victims' health, and even less on the health of male victims.¹³⁸ This, by extension, means that our knowledge of the issue is often limited to reproductive health, and does not include other health needs of women and girls, or the general needs of men and boys. For example, many agricultural workers also face physical violence and are generally prone to experience advanced forms of coercion and control, as well as precarious working conditions. This affects both their physical and psychological health.¹³⁹ Long-term health issues of men and women in labour exploitation caused by chemicals, heavy weights and other hardship conditions are often not covered in donors' programmes. Further research suggests that victims of domestic servitude are exposed to severe levels of sexual, physical and psychological abuse.¹⁴⁰ Isolation and cohabitation with the trafficker often exacerbates the level of dependency and may result in increased levels of intimacy, as for example by the trafficker providing accommodation or transport, or also employing other family members.

“ There is a belief that sexual trauma is stronger and takes precedence over other forms of traumas. In the case of domestic servitude, where the majority of victims are women, many of these women experience forms of extreme violence, even torture, which is one of the most traumatic experiences, and they are not often offered special assistance. Or for example, men exploited in labour in the fishing industry, living in poor and extremely unhealthy conditions on fishing boats, are not offered these [assistance] measures because labour exploitation is not considered as serious as other forms of exploitation.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Italy

Safe accommodation needs

Safe and appropriate housing is a priority need for victims of trafficking because it is central to supporting their recovery as independent individuals. The Directive 2012/29/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council established minimum standards on the rights, support and protection of victims of crime, to develop and provide “shelters and any other appropriate interim accommodation for victims in need of a safe place due to an imminent risk of secondary and repeat victimization, of intimidation and of retaliation”, as well as “targeted and integrated support for victims with specific needs, such as victims of sexual violence, victims of gender-based violence and victims of violence in close relationships, including trauma support and counselling”. For victims of trafficking, appropriate gender-sensitive accommodation facilities as an assistance element is key in supporting their recovery and preventing further trauma.

Generally, providing temporary accommodation to victims of trafficking can be difficult due to lack of resources. When it comes to victims who are not single women, there are often very limited options. During country visits, the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator on Combating THB noted that States often end up with solutions of mixed accommodations for both male and female victims, although sometimes hosted in different areas of the facility. Only a few OSCE countries have shelters for men or women with children. Moreover, recent research shows that there is negligible accommodation available for victims who do not fit the *ideal victim* profile, leading to difficulties for such individuals to gain access to assistance, since the services that are available often do not take these victims into account. Many of these victims rarely come into contact with anti-trafficking organizations, and are often sceptical that these organizations can meet their needs without marginalizing them further.¹⁴²

“ And when we get to the transgender or LGBTQ+ community¹⁴³, that's when it gets really, really sad, because they will most of the time fall between chairs. [...] There are some terrible, terrible stories of transgender women, for example, who have been acquitted in awful situations of sexual exploitation and in forced prostitution where actually it's difficult to help them because they don't fit the gender norm. They don't fit. Where are we going to put them? Are we going to put them with the women? No, we can't do that. Are we going to put them with men? No, we can't. It really gets apparent that we are so stuck in gender stereotypes, rather than meeting the person as they are.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Denmark

In its successive reports, GRETA has highlighted that “while most evaluated countries take due account of the needs of female victims of trafficking, a number of countries still fail to offer assistance services, including accommodation, to male victims of trafficking.”¹⁴⁴ In 2017, it found that only nine countries (out of 47 parties to the Council of Europe Convention) offered appropriate support, including shelters, to male victims of trafficking.¹⁴⁵ Norway for instance opened a shelter run by the Salvation Army in the Oslo area with four beds specifically for male victims of trafficking and couples, providing victims with healthcare, housing and training, including Norwegian and English language classes.¹⁴⁶ And in Portugal, a government-funded shelter for male victims of trafficking run by the NGO Saúde em Português was opened. Victims are provided with social and legal support, as well as language courses, vocational training and assistance in accessing the labour market.¹⁴⁷ The Portuguese government funds a total of five NGO-operated shelters exclusively for trafficking victims – two for adult female victims and their children, two for adult male victims, and one for children.¹⁴⁸

While these are encouraging signs that the different needs of victims are being recognized, in most countries there is still a lack of structures dedicated to providing tailored assistance to male and female victims of trafficking.

The role of gender in service provision

There has been extensive discussion on whether or not victims of trafficking should be matched with service providers according to their gender. Currently, most direct service providers in the anti-trafficking field, such as counsellors at crisis centres or shelters, are female. With a few exceptions, services are often advertised as being female-centred. This can discourage male victims from taking a first step to engage. In addition to identification challenges due to men's denial of their victimhood, male victims might reject assistance offered by NGOs specifically dedicated to women, since these usually lack personnel trained to initiate conversations with male victims.

According to participants in the Study, unlike in prevention interventions where men might feel more comfortable speaking with other men, when it comes to the aspect of care in assistance and protection work, female service providers are sometimes considered easier to connect with. In some cases, men and boys might prefer a female rather than a male service provider, because most men they have encountered in their life have been rough or even violent towards them.

“ I would say that one of the experiences I have from interviewing boys for example is that they are pretty afraid of men being very tough, violent or angry. So that's why they are so keen to meet women or nice men who speak with a low voice [gently].”

Anti-trafficking expert in Sweden

“ Social services, that's a woman-based field and I think that's great when we're talking about access to safe care. It is definitely for victims to feel like they can connect with female or feminine-expressing people as far as being matched with people providing services. But I also think there's a huge deficit as far as men taking responsibility for problems they have created. And this being seen as a woman's issue, or a children's issue, or a survivors' issue.”

Survivor of trafficking and service provider in the USA

Overall, the victim's decision to seek care is highly personal and the role of gender in service provision cannot be disregarded. Efforts must be focused on creating a victim-centred and non-judgmental environment so that the victims feel safe to seek care and disclose to someone they can trust.¹⁴⁹ The analysis of the victims' protection needs must be tailored to their individual trafficking experiences which are shaped by a variety of intersecting factors, including gender.

Protecting all victims of sexual exploitation

Since trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation is the most detected form of trafficking and the vast majority of the detected victims of this form of trafficking are females (67% are adult women and 25% are underage girls according to the UNODC 2020 Global Report), most anti-trafficking service provision is directed at victims of sexual exploitation. Despite this prevalence, women and girls continue to lack access to critically needed services. Moreover, the Study revealed significant deficiencies in services tailored to the needs of male victims. The lack of understanding of the harm that male victims endure impedes the development and implementation of needs-based assistance packages, although States have international obligations under the Palermo Protocol and other legal instruments to protect and assist all victims of trafficking, with full respect for their human rights. The taboo surrounding sexual exploitation of male victims combined with the absence of services available for these victims contributes to making this problem less visible. There is a lack of services for boys and men, although together they account for some 8% of the detected victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

It is important to highlight, however, the progress and promising practices that have been implemented throughout the OSCE participating States. In 2014, for example, the United Kingdom created the Male Rape Support Fund, the first-ever fund specifically dedicated to working with male victims. Also a national awareness-raising campaign highlighting male sexual violence was launched. As a result of this, Male Survivors Partnership, a charity supported by the Home Office, was established to provide male victims of sexual abuse, rape, and sexual exploitation a single point of reference for national and local support services.¹⁵⁰ It has since become the national umbrella agency for organizations working with boy and men victims of sexual abuse, and a reference point for male survivors to find national, regional or local support. Another example is the U.S.-based non-profit organization Male Survivor, which has over 14,000 international registered members from over 200 countries in the world. It is committed to preventing, healing, and eliminating all forms of sexual victimization of boys and men through support, treatment, research, education, advocacy and activism. It is dedicated to providing personalized support for men at every stage of the healing process through a variety of educational resources, online forums, professional therapists and in-person events.¹⁵¹

Study participants also reported deficiencies in protection mechanisms for others who do not fit the *ideal victim* profile:

“ They're just not addressing all the men. There are probably a lot more men also exploited in sex trafficking than we care to talk about. We know for a fact that the LGBTQ+ community is very much exploited in sex work as well.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Denmark

“ Nobody talks about it, but everyone I know in the queer and transgender community either has sold sex or is close to someone who has sold sex, whether for survival or because they were compelled to by a partner. It isn't looked at the same way as trafficking of straight people. The only reason we don't call that trafficking is because they're not under 18, let's be honest. The danger to me is that there's no understanding or analysis of what is happening as non-consensual or as trafficking or as not okay. Because it's just an accepted fact of life. And so you rationalize it. And it happens – it's endemic. [...] But changing the messaging could go a long way to helping with some of that, and just having services and outreach. It's a chicken or egg problem – we don't have any services because no one does work on serving trafficking in the queer and trans community, and so no one really thinks of it as a problem.”

Survivor of trafficking in the USA

ADVOCATING GENDER-SENSITIVE PROTECTION through the OSCE Special Representative's country visits

On the occasion of country visits, the OSCE Special Representative for Combating THB has encouraged authorities to review the assistance and protection services available to victims of trafficking to ensure that they respond to the individual needs of the victims, including gender and age-specific needs, meet adequate quality standards, and provide for sufficient reintegration periods. The lack of services for all genders and age groups is of concern, given that since 2011 the country visit assessments have highlighted an overall decline in attention to assistance and protection services, in particular due to the lack of funding to service providers among civil society organizations. As a result, many organizations are coping with this dire situation by accommodating victims of trafficking under existing projects focusing on other types of violations, such as domestic violence against women. This arrangement not only provides a one-gender response to the issue, it also overshadows the specificity and diversity of trauma experienced by victims of trafficking of all genders.

Similarly, it was observed that States sometimes accommodate child victims of trafficking in children's institutions caring for the mentally ill or children with behavioural difficulties. Such an approach represents a major obstacle to accessing adequate and needs-based protection as well as care for victims of all genders and all ages. Concerns over mixed accommodations, as well as over the lack of equal opportunities for assistance for male and female victims of trafficking are recurrent in a number of countries in the OSCE region, particularly given the increasing number of identified male victims in the recent years. This situation calls for addressing the different needs and risks associated with trafficked persons by allocating sustainable financial resources to civil society organizations providing assistance and support services to trafficked persons.

The Special Representative visited centres in a number of European countries that accommodated victims of trafficking along with asylum-seekers. For example, in one country, the Special Representative noted that the current system did not represent appropriate and safe housing for victims of trafficking, since trafficking victims were mixed with non-victim asylum seekers, genders were mixed, and the centre did not offer an adequate trauma-informed approach. The stakeholders who were met during the visit shared concerns about incidents of sexual harassment experienced by trafficked women, as well as the safety risks faced by persons with acute traumatic experiences. In this regard, the Special Representative welcomed the plans of the authorities to set up a dedicated shelter for trafficked persons in co-operation with relevant organizations. He recommended that such a shelter should not only provide medical assistance, but should also have dedicated social workers providing psycho-social support and helping the reintegration of victims.

Prosecution of Trafficking in Human Beings

Similar to the discussion on the pillars of prevention and protection, a gender-sensitive approach is also central to the successful investigation and prosecution of trafficking cases. Insights into the role of gender in shaping victim/trafficker relationships, as well as in shaping the victim/criminal justice relationship, are needed for prosecuting trafficking crimes more effectively. The following sections focus on the gender-related challenges that stand in the way of holding traffickers accountable and delivering justice to victims.

Gender and the victim/trafficker relationship

In THB cases, the relationship between the victim and the trafficker may be complex. It may involve trauma bonding, familial ties and romantic relationships, and also violence, fear and manipulation. Exploring the trafficking history and, in particular, the gender dynamics of the victim/trafficker relationship is essential for law enforcement to understand the strategies used by the trafficker to exert power and control over the victim, as well as to identify any impediments to the victim cooperating with law enforcement. This can help answer a common question that comes to mind when the criminal justice system faces a victim: “Why didn’t you just run away?”¹⁵² The UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons has underlined that the power imbalance used by traffickers to impose exploitative conditions “has a strong gender component, as women and girls are subject to intersecting discrimination as a consequence of patriarchal social norms.”¹⁵³ Understanding the complexity and nature of victim–perpetrator relationships will also make it easier for law enforcement to comprehend a victim’s behaviour, which is sometimes aimed at protecting their trafficker at their own expense.

Although cases involving young male victims were brought up in the context of the Study, the majority of participants discussed gender aspects in the criminal justice process from the

perspective of female victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. According to the participants, in many instances traffickers abuse the position of vulnerability of the victims, using various forms of deceit to achieve their final aim of exploitation. The survey participants also highlighted the main elements prevalent among the gendered means used to control victims (Table 2).

The common denominator in the expert group discussions and interviews was the topic of betrayal experienced by victims. Betrayal can happen as a result of family members being involved in the recruitment or trafficking of a victim, as well as through a bond developing between the trafficker and the victim prior to exploitation. Both the human-induced character of the crime, as well as the element of betrayal have a direct effect on the willingness of victims to co-operate with authorities or accept assistance from others, since – based on their past experience – victims are less likely to trust other people.

There are various types of relationships between traffickers and victims, and they also differ in the multitude of trafficking contexts. The Study has identified four recurring themes that link the victim–perpetrator relationship with gender: family, romance, trauma bonding and fear.

Table 2: Gendered means of control

Means of control	Girls	Women	Boys	Men	Other	Number of responses
1. Physical force/abuse	28.83 %	29.45 %	20.25 %	17.79 %	3.68 %	163
2. Debt bondage	20.93 %	31.01 %	17.05 %	26.36 %	4.65 %	129
3. Brainwashing/mind control	28.35 %	30.71 %	22.05 %	14.96 %	3.94 %	127
4. Sexual violence	33.10 %	35.92 %	18.31 %	8.45 %	4.23 %	142
5. Drug/alcohol dependency	22.90 %	30.53 %	19.85 %	22.14 %	4.58 %	131
6. Confiscation of ID/documentation	23.45 %	31.03 %	16.55 %	24.14 %	4.83 %	145
7. Verbal threats/abuse	27.68 %	29.38 %	20.90 %	18.08 %	3.95 %	177
8. Fraud	21.30 %	28.70 %	18.52 %	25.93 %	5.56 %	108
9. Romantic relationship	40.21 %	41.24 %	10.31 %	5.15 %	3.09 %	97

Family

The involvement of family members in recruitment and exploitation of victims is a common pattern. The Study participants noted that recruitment by relatives can be of gendered nature. For example, the recruitment or sale of young women and girls into sexual exploitation is sometimes done by female family members, such as aunts or mothers. There is a gendered difference both in terms of which member of a family is forced into exploitation, as well as in terms of the leverage that victims of different genders can use to negotiate their way out of trafficking.

“ When you see the family actually being part of helping the traffic of a person, I think we see that more when we talk about young girls and women, whereas the men, in contrast, actually have more agency.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Denmark

Several of the Study participants indicated that there are differences in how family members approach male and female victims, either contributing to their vulnerability to trafficking, or being directly involved in the recruitment. One observed trend is boys being pushed out of their homes by family members to find a means to survive or support their family. This can lead to very risky decisions resulting in exploitation. In such cases, family members are not directly involved in recruitment or the act of trafficking. On the other hand, Study participants referred to the effects of patriarchy, explaining that girls tend to have less agency, thus making the “sale” of young women and girls by family members a more frequent occurrence than that of boys. Another example of the role of the family mentioned by an anti-trafficking expert in Germany is when women who have been made to prostitute procure younger or “prettier family members in order not to prostitute themselves”. An anti-trafficking expert on Russia and Central Asia also expressed the importance of taking family networks into account in THB, citing as an example the role of female family members, such as “a mother taking her own daughter to a Sheikh in Dubai, or an aunt trafficking her cousins to other friends from other kinds of networks”.

Romance

Another relationship that is used both as a recruitment technique and a means of exploitation is romance. A Study participant in Germany mentioned that the role of relationships in trafficking are different depending on the gender of the trafficker. For example “in sex trafficking, men will use sexuality in some way when they try to gain female victims”, whereas “women [traffickers] [...] have been identified as using more a kind of friendship bond”. The Study highlighted several stories of girls being in what they perceived as a romantic relationship while being exploited, making it more difficult for the victim to understand that they were in fact trafficked. For example, in the *United States v. Yarbrough et al.* case, while the trafficker repeatedly used false promises of romantic relationships and family to target and lure victims as young as 15 years old into trafficking, one victim testified that she and other victims were “in love” with the trafficker.¹⁵⁴ Victims who have a psychological bond to their traffickers through intimate relationships might have difficulties testifying in court because of that emotional bond. A police officer working with trafficking cases in the United States noted that the “boyfriend pimps” can be very successful in keeping a victim under their control during exploitation, but also in protecting the trafficker should the case be investigated by law enforcement.

“ The majority of the pimps that are successful are the boyfriend pimps, so they’ll come alongside somebody and they’ll be very loving towards them and just pay a lot of attention to them, maybe more attention than they’ve received from a male figure or somebody in their life in a long time, and then they just start chipping away, and then they find out just by getting to know them, hey, this is their vulnerability so I’m going to use that against them. Oh yeah, I know they don’t have a great relationship with their father, or this happened to them at a young age so I’m going to use that. So again that’s why we call them predators because they look for weaknesses, and then they exploit it.”

Police officer in the USA

Some countries have developed specific strategies to tackle this phenomenon. For example, the Netherlands has allocated resources to improve the fight against “lover boy” recruitment techniques and increased co-operation between care organizations, the police and justice authorities. Moreover, due to the increased use of the internet and social media, the “lover boy” method has evolved, therefore requiring the introduction of new measures to improve investigation and prosecution. These measures include the use of “decoy teens” to identify “lover boys” online to prevent further recruitment.¹⁵⁵

Although the patterns of romantic victim/trafficker relationships are often found in sex trafficking, they are also found in cases of labour trafficking. For example, in the *Doe v. Faraghala* case, which was heard in a Superior Court in California, the defendant married a Moroccan citizen in Egypt and brought her to the United States.

*Upon arrival, the victim learned that the defendant was already married with two children. The defendant and his wife allegedly forced her to work as a domestic servant in their home and as a janitor in their limousine business, using physical violence, sexual assault, emotional abuse, and threats against the victim’s family as means of coercion.*¹⁵⁶

It is also worth noting that in recent years, the widespread use of the internet and social media has increasingly played a role in initiating this type of relationship, with personal information used to take advantage of victims’ vulnerabilities and facilitating virtual contacts between traffickers and victims. In 2020, CEDAW noted that countries were experiencing a global rise in cyberspace trafficking during the Covid-19 pandemic, and that trafficking of women and girls continued to be channelled through social media, the dark web and messaging platforms, which provide easy access for potential victims, but hide the identity of perpetrators.¹⁵⁷

Trauma bonding

Family-like relationships also develop in non-family settings. Such bonds are often used to keep individuals in exploitation. Trauma bonding is a psychological response to abuse, entailing an unhealthy bond between perpetrator and victim. One form of trauma bonding is the “Stockholm Syndrome”, which occurs when a trafficker, male or female, uses repeated traumatic events and chronic abuse based on both rewards and punishments to foster a powerful emotional dependence and attachment of the victim to the trafficker. This type of relationship

creates confusion and a false sense of relationship, resulting in the victim developing gratefulness, trust and loyalty to the trafficker, as well as losing a sense of self.¹⁵⁸ In such cases, traffickers may take on a role of protector or caretaker to maintain control of the victim, who views them as a spousal or parental figure. Some survivors of trafficking interviewed for this Study shared recollections of bonding and family-like relationships within the collectives where they were held and exploited.

“ Our one day off was really just a day that this particular trafficker felt like if we created some semblance of family and connection, then girls would stay longer. So our family day was Sunday and we would go [...] shopping that we needed to do to replenish groceries and stuff like that in the house, and then get clothes and then we would go out to dinner. And so that was that piece of like belonging, that emotional connection where we all got to hang out, have fun, have a drink, they’ll get food. Sometimes we’d go watch a movie or ... one time, he actually even took us to Six Flags [amusement park] and we got to spend the entire day riding roller coasters and having fun. So there was always light at the end of the week. And that helped reinforce those trauma bonds for sure. And then after, if you stayed with him for a year, after your year, he would take you on vacation. You got to pick the place. His bottom, the last vacation before I left them, he had taken her to Punta Cana. And they spent a week out there and that was her like year anniversary. And after a year you actually get a wedding band, a diamond and crested wedding band and you’re like officially in a relationship.”

Survivor of trafficking in the USA

Such trauma bonds are used to create an environment in which the victims are somehow rewarded after their abuse, thus encouraging them to stay by establishing an impression of family and care. A Study participant also shared that motherly attitudes of female traffickers are used as a means to control victims and as a manipulation technique. “South-East Asian brothel owners are called mum by the victims and spend holidays together. [They] have a pretend family dynamic going on.” This motherly role is often facilitated by other vulnerability factors, such as the victims not speaking the local language, not being familiar with the local culture, and not knowing their rights.

“ The motherly nature or role is used to manipulate victims. The case for [...] Nigerian perpetrators speaking the same language, the female perpetrators will make them [the victims] Nigerian food, offer advice, translate.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Germany

Although trauma bonding can affect both male and female victims, research has shown differences in the impact of trauma on male and female brains, thereby suggesting the need for gender-specific trauma analysis and intervention.¹⁵⁹ Being aware of these relationships and the nature of trauma bonding can facilitate both the identification of victims, as well as the prosecution of the traffickers.

Violence and fear

Complex power dynamics and structural inequalities related to gender, as well as age, race and social status, often underlie the relationship between trafficker and victim. Prior to being trafficked, many victims have endured multiple forms of abuse, such as domestic violence and sexual assault, which increases their isolation, stigma, and emotional and economic vulnerability.

According to the Counter Trafficking Data Collaborative (CTDC) global data hub on human trafficking, there are similarities and differences in the means used by traffickers to control male and female victims.¹⁶⁰ For example, both female and male victims are subjected to psychological abuse. However, the CTDC found that among detected victims, female victims are more often restricted in their movement and subjected to threats and physical abuse, while male victims are typically controlled through false promises and withholding of earnings. The findings from this Study (see Table 2: Gendered means of control) also show that male victims are more likely to be sub-

jected to deceit rather than overt violence. Nevertheless, the freedom of movement of male victims of trafficking for forced labour can also be restricted through various means: from indirect restrictions such as withholding passports to ensure migrant workers do not leave, to physical restrictions as construction sites or factories that are closed and locked.¹⁶¹ Other means of freedom restriction experienced by male victims of forced labour include barracks where workers sleep being locked, workers being placed in emptied wells, or their shoes being taken away so they cannot walk away. Other sectors such as the seafaring and fishing industries are also characterized by movement restrictions, with seafarers and fishers, mostly men, being forced to work on boats in open water for extended periods of time.¹⁶² The effective identification of such abusive situations is key to unveiling control and manipulation patterns and ensuring an adequate criminal justice response.

In situations where traffickers use threats and fear, victims may feel unable to testify in criminal proceedings because of concerns over their own safety. To discourage them from reporting crimes or testifying, both men and women face blackmailing, intimidation and threats to their family members and children. A sex trafficking survivor from the United States, today a direct service provider, said she would never testify against her trafficker for those very reasons. She described the psychological, emotional and financial control tactics that are often used to make victims appear to be perpetrators. She also noted that the justice system often does not have the resources or capacity to offer victims and their families the protection they would need to be able to testify safely.

To respond effectively to a victim's needs and strengthen a legal case, it is essential to identify the power and control elements described above. However, Study participants highlighted that criminal justice practitioners often underestimate the importance of the gender-specific aspects of the coercive control exerted by traffickers on victims, especially when there is no physical abuse. That is why collaboration with mental health providers and survivors' advocates with gender knowledge is critical to understanding and addressing the power imbalances and less visible forms of abuse in relationships between victims and traffickers. As highlighted by the European Institute for Gender Equality, “understanding the dynamics of violence against women, including the elements of power and control, the gradual impairment of the violent situation and the complexity of the aspects causing vulnerability to exploitation and violence, may assist the criminal justice practitioners to apply and interpret the definition of human trafficking and achieve convictions.”¹⁶³ The same applies to cases of male victims who have endured abuse.

Gender and the victim/criminal justice relationship

As discussed above, gender not only plays a role in shaping the crime as it relates to the victim's relationship with the trafficker, it also influences the behaviour of criminal justice practitioners and their response to the crime. In particular, gender stereotyping contributes to the denial of agency for victims and the rejection of victimhood of persons who do not fit the *ideal victim* profile. As repeatedly highlighted by the Study participants, victims of trafficking who do not fit the socially constructed perceptions and expectations of victimhood often do not get access to the full spectrum of rights afforded by the criminal justice system. In some cases, victims are even investigated and prosecuted for offences they committed in the context of their exploitation.

Gender prejudice towards women and men

According to the Study participants, stereotypes related to the *ideal victim* profile can impact decisions made by law enforcement and the judiciary. These stereotypes may lead to maltreatment of victims, such as inappropriate questioning or even sexual misconduct, as well as dismissal of victimization claims and denial of victimhood status. Study participants reported that such misconduct against women or girls was often directly connected to the form of trafficking they had been exploited in – sexual exploitation – as well as their supposed blameworthy behaviour contradicting the common understanding of victimhood.

Study participants reported that defence attorneys representing accused traffickers are sometimes permitted to call the victim's character and behaviour into question on the stand, in attempts to challenge their credibility. For example, a Study participant described how defence lawyers tried to dismiss a particular victim's claims of being sex trafficked by providing details of underwear she had bought with the trafficker's money and then worn when providing sexual services. In this particular case, the defence was trying to dismiss the victim's claim that she had been forced to provide these services, because she herself had purchased the lingerie she later wore with clients. Defence lawyers also showed pictures of the victim from Facebook and Instagram, using them to attack her morality in the attempt to prove she was not a victim of trafficking. This example highlights that in courts, attention is often paid to victims' lifestyle or conduct before or during their trafficking experience to prove that the victim provoked a crime, instead of studying the circumstances from the point of view of vulnerability.

“ Another thing I noticed was the attitude among some of my colleagues in rape cases, i.e. sexual violence – they would ask questions like ‘What were you wearing? Why? What did you expect would happen, if you were dressed like that?’ I used to get into confrontations with them, saying that gold may be displayed in a shop window, but it doesn't mean that anyone can take it.”

Prosecutor in Greece

Another challenge highlighted by a Study participant is the lack of understanding of forms of trafficking such as forced marriage or labour exploitation of women, which are disregarded as cultural practices.

“ The problem occurs with labour exploitation and especially forced marriage. [Prosecutors and law enforcement] give these cases no importance, almost ignoring them. They do not collect evidence in a proper way. They don't believe that there is enough evidence in these cases, since they don't know how to prove something when they themselves lack the understanding that these women were subject to exploitation. In a couple of cases, judges decided in the first instance, when it came to the forced marrying of a 13-year-old, that this was not a case of human trafficking, but rather a traditional practice of negotiated marriage. There is no mention of such a practice in any law, [...] yet, regardless of this fact, the judge, who should be a man of the law, decided against the law, both in the first and second instance. It is now being taken to be a precedent. Now we are working on analysing that case. It's awful that such questions are asked in judicial proceedings, the manner in which such victims are treated. It all involves a high degree of stigmatisation and prejudice against the victims.”

Service provider in Bosnia and Herzegovina

During an official visit to a Western European country, the OSCE Special Representative and Co-ordinator on Combating THB was also made aware of instances of maltreatment against male victims of labour exploitation during investigations and court proceedings. One particular area of concern was that while psychologists were invited to assist some victims during trials, this psychological assistance was limited to victims of sexual exploitation, thereby leaving victims of labour exploitation without adequate assistance. This is due to the common belief that labour exploitation victims do not experience trauma. In this regard, it is important to recall that trauma can be present in every trafficking case, even if the level of trauma and needs vary.

Criminalization of the victim

In justice systems, victimhood is largely understood as being the opposite of notions of choice, agency and autonomy. Yet cases frequently involve nuanced circumstances if victims displayed certain elements of voluntariness at some point in their trafficking experience. These circumstances are exactly why concepts such as trauma bonding are crucial to understanding victim behaviour and to explain why a victim might not flee even though he or she had the opportunity. Victim agency can manifest in the beginning stages of trafficking, when an individual chooses to travel or enter potentially precarious employment, or in the final stage, when the victim could leave but chooses not to for fear of retribution or in the hope of receiving eventual payment. Victims who demonstrate some level of voluntary action are often seen by law enforcement as blameworthy agents. This can be a core reason for victims being reluctant to disclose their exploitation – fear of being held criminally liable, in particular when they were compelled to commit crimes in the context of their exploitation. These situations show the importance of applying the non-punishment principle embedded in article 26 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings, and in article 8 of the Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council. The intention behind these instruments is to protect victims who were compelled to commit crimes by their traffickers.¹⁶⁴

Society, and by extension law enforcement, is conditioned by gendered assumptions that see women and girls as potential victims and men and boys as potential perpetrators. The limited ability of criminal justice systems to recognize men and boys as trafficked persons was highlighted throughout the Study. One participant particularly emphasised the treatment of young boys involved in forced criminality. The wrong-doing of such “victim-offenders” obscures their victimhood and triggers hostile behaviour in male law enforcement officers, who

“meet these boys with anger”. The rights of men and boys as victims of trafficking are often overlooked due to limited acknowledgement that participation in criminal activities can be the result of force and coercion.¹⁶⁵

The complexity of the “ideal trafficker”

The survey conducted for the purpose of this paper revealed that the participants who dealt directly with traffickers have mainly come across male traffickers involved in labour and sex trafficking, although female traffickers were also found in both trafficking sectors (see Table 3).

While the limited scope of the survey does not allow us to make a generalization for the entire OSCE region, these findings show that both men and women are involved in the trafficking of persons, and for the purposes of both sexual and labour exploitation. Global data also indicate that the number of women suspected or prosecuted for trafficking in human beings in the OSCE region is significant when compared to other types of crime. According to UNODC data from 2007 to 2018, roughly 4 in 10 trafficking offenders were female.¹⁶⁶ In 2018, Eastern Europe and Central Asia reported the highest percentages of females prosecuted (76%) and convicted (80%).¹⁶⁷ Data from Azerbaijan are particularly notable: in 2016, 69 of 70 perpetrators were women, 25 of 33 in 2017, and 22 of 27 in 2019.¹⁶⁸

Information is still extremely limited about the different ways women and men are involved in trafficking, and the gendered circumstances determining that involvement. Stereotyped narratives and portrayals of traffickers tend to depict women charged with trafficking offences as reluctant or subordinate participants in the trafficking crime. Men are more readily identified by law enforcement as perpetrators.¹⁶⁹ Several Study participants noted that within criminal justice systems, female perpetrators are seen either as vulnerable, agentless victims or as especially vile criminals. An anti-trafficking expert in Finland highlighted the unfounded view of female perpetrators as being exceptionally “bad and vile somehow”. In contrast, an expert in Germany noted that the other side of the female perpetrator coin is the so-called victim-perpetrator.

Table 3: Number of traffickers dealt with by survey participants

	Men	Women	Total
Labour traffickers	65	23	88
Sex traffickers	325	31	356
Total	390	54	

Gender-sensitive approaches in the criminal justice system

“ There are more female traffickers than in any other criminal setting. In some areas there are more female perpetrators since they are involved in recruiting, and thus are more easily identified by the police. It is very difficult to understand the relationships in red light districts, who is in power. It is usually assumed by the police as well as NGOs that male perpetrators are behind it. It's very complicated to understand the dynamics since the relationships are very complex. However the male perpetrator is more frequently assumed. They don't have enough information to know, but that is what they assume.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Germany

Often women who are convicted for trafficking have ended up in this situation as a result of their own victimization. Cases of female victim-turned-offender show a range of motives for engaging in trafficking, including seeking a means to alleviate their own victimization, securing affection from their trafficker, or because they have no alternative but to obey.¹⁷⁰ The UNODC case law analysis of female victim-defendants in the context of trafficking for sexual exploitation also demonstrated the widespread use of gender stereotypes in determining who is a “good” victim deserving protection, and who is a trafficker.¹⁷¹

Study participants also mentioned that while the victim-perpetrator concept is sometimes applied to women, it is rarely assumed in cases of men:

“ In cases of male offenders, their prior victimization is never assumed. In court trials, women are asked about prior victimization, but male perpetrators are never asked this question. For women it can be violence in childhood. This prior victimization either leads to a more serious charge, because as prior victims they should have had more empathy, or they are traumatized or have no other choice and therefore commit the crime.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Germany

In conclusion, social constructions of “ideal perpetrators” and “ideal victims” obstruct justice. For justice to be delivered to all victims, when examining trafficking cases gendered biases must be taken into account.

Stereotypes about gender roles are embedded in societies and affect everyone. Gender sensitivity is thus critical in a criminal justice system. In each stage of a criminal justice process, there is a risk of overlooking gender biases. To devise strategies that will protect all victims, this must be taken into account, especially during the first steps of identifying a trafficking victim. Gender biases in criminal justice practices are a form of discrimination that can result in certain victims receiving less attention or protection. A first step towards addressing and preventing such pitfalls is recognising biases, whether explicit or implicit, conscious or unconscious. These pitfalls may include underreporting forms of trafficking that mainly target victims of another sex, interrogating rather than interviewing victims due to their involvement in criminal activities, or failing to offer assistance to male trafficking victims because of the gender bias that men are resilient.¹⁷²

Interviewing victims

One Study participant shared her experience working with female victims of sexual exploitation. She explained that since these women have been exploited by men in one way or another throughout their trafficking experience, they will therefore have difficulties trusting a man to help them.

“ Female victims who have been sexually exploited often suspect that any man will sooner or later try to use them. In the long run, it could be empowering to build relationships with trustworthy men, but the helping contact should first be established between women.”

Anti-trafficking expert in Sweden

In some justice systems, men have been used to interview potential victims in cases of sexual exploitation as a way to prove to victims that not all men are like their traffickers.¹⁷³ This approach is risky and potentially intimidating, however, since it reduces the victim's sense of control and trust. The Study participants recognized that Governments have made efforts to develop gender guidelines to ensure, for example, that women are interviewed by female police officers, or that not too many men are present when statements are taken from female victims. Nonetheless, there is also evidence that in certain cases, pairing victims with law enforcement officers of the opposite sex might be the best choice. For example, male migrant workers who experienced rape and sexual exploitation in the context of their labour exploitation might rather tell their story to a woman than to a man.

Another Study participant who works with boys and young men shared concerns about the lack of gender awareness in the criminal justice system, specifically regarding how male police officers deal with boy victims, especially those whose exploi-

tation involved performing illegal activities such as transporting and selling drugs. These victims often associate men with aggression, even if a man is offering help and assistance. It is nevertheless important to recall that the gender of the interviewer alone does not guarantee a successful exchange. Both men and women can be compassionate and professional, but it is also possible for both men and women to be rude and incompetent.¹⁷⁴

Ultimately, decisions about what approach to take when pairing a victim with a law enforcement officer, or any other actor involved in the investigation and prosecution, should be made by taking into account all factors that have shaped the individual's victimhood, including their gender. While gender is an important factor in building a trustful relationship with a victim, equally important to consider are cultural parameters and individual preferences. In effect, in some cases gender pairing done with the mere intent to match the victim's gender with the officer's gender can cause more harm than good. Regular assessments should be made of the victim/criminal justice officer relationship. These should examine effectiveness, as well as compliance with the best interests of the victim. This highlights the importance of focusing primarily on the needs of victims based on the type of exploitation and trauma they have endured. Collaboration between law enforcement and survivor-led organizations was highlighted as a good practice for taking the victim's perspective into account.

“ And so as police officers, we need to be as progressive as the rest of the world and that's why we invited a survivor-led organization to help us figure out how to investigate this. Our understanding is, well if you're [...] selling sex and a guy is buying, then you're a prostitute and you're a suspect and we're going to arrest you. When the reality is, after meeting with these gals and getting a better understanding of it, [...] we are in contact with victims.”

Police officer in the USA

Female representation in the criminal justice sector

The matter of gender-appropriate pairing of victims and law enforcement officials leads to questions about gender (im)balance in the criminal justice system itself. Achieving gender-sensitivity in the criminal justice sector, however, is not simply done by hiring more women in police departments or the judiciary. It is about transforming organizational culture and power relations that sustain inequality.

“ In cases where I was the prosecutor, and the only woman in the proceedings, including the defendant, the defence and the jury, there wasn't too much sympathy; it seemed as if there was a shadow of doubt visible on all those faces. It was like all those men doubted that a criminal offence had been committed in the first place.”

Prosecutor in Greece

In this regard, the OSCE participating States have committed to “promote the full involvement of women in judicial, prosecutorial and law enforcement institutions and to ensure that all relevant public officials are fully trained and sensitized in recognizing, documenting and processing cases of violence against women and children.”¹⁷⁵ The OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating THB has supported these efforts by including women in its capacity-building activities. For example, the simulation-based training exercises on combating THB along migration routes organized by the Office between 2016 and 2019 gathered together 529 practitioners, of whom 57.5% were women, including 36% in fields traditionally dominated by men – law enforcement, financial investigation and prosecution. Moreover, the scripts prepared for national simulation-based training included not only THB cases of sexual exploitation, but also of labour exploitation. This was to enhance the trainees' understanding of the gender-specific needs of both female and male victims of trafficking, and to strengthen the trainees' capacity to adequately address those needs. Ensuring gender balance at the national level is nevertheless a persistent challenge, given the low number of female law enforcement candidates, as well as the low number of male candidates for social service providers.

To support participating States in addressing challenges related to the recruitment, retention and career development of women in the security sector, OSCE field operations have accompanied their respective host countries in building more gender-balanced and gender-responsive law enforcement institutions. For example, the OSCE Mission to Bosnia and Herzegovina has closely co-operated with associations of women police officers and members of the Bosnia and Herzegovina Association of Women Judges to provide relevant capacity-building. In another example, the Kyrgyz Association of Women in the Security Sector was established in 2017 with the support of the OSCE Programme Office in Bishkek. It includes representatives from all law enforcement agencies of Kyrgyzstan and focuses on enhancing the capacity of women and achieving gender equality in the security sector. In Serbia, the OSCE Mission promoted gender-sensitive recruitment policies and the enrolment of women in basic police training, including through support to the development of national action plans for the implementation of the UN Security Council Resolution 1325.¹⁷⁵ And in Montenegro, the Strategic Police Matters Unit of the OSCE Secretariat's Transnational Threats Department launched first pilot activities aimed at increasing and supporting the meaningful participation of women at all levels of policing.¹⁷⁷

As another promising practice, in Georgia, a special regional Task Force to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings was established in 2014 in the Adjara region's Central Criminal Police department based on a Memorandum of Understanding between the Prosecutor's Office, the Ministry of Interior and the IOM. This Task Force is composed of five male prosecutors and two female investigators trained to interview women and children. The inclusion of female trained investigators in the specialized unit was reported to have had a positive impact on the overall effectiveness and ability of the unit to detect and investigate trafficking in human beings.¹⁷⁸

Promoting gender skills and knowledge

As highlighted by the Study respondents, lack of gender-sensitivity in prosecution is a result of limited awareness by criminal justice practitioners and the lack of sufficient education and training.

“ I firmly believe that representatives of institutions who work with victims are not gender-sensitive enough, or adequately educated in this area. They actually have no opportunity to undergo training at the state level to make their approach more sensitive, and this is what causes secondary victimization of women.”

Service provider in Serbia

Capacity-building with an emphasis on gender-sensitivity training remains an ongoing need, in particular to ensure the effective implementation of gender risk assessment protocols by law enforcement officers. This is still missing in many countries. Among various efforts to advance gender sensitivity, the Gender and Security Toolkit published by the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights promotes a human rights and gender-sensitive approach to ensure that security providers pay attention to the needs and rights of both women and men.¹⁷⁹

In 2019, the OSCE Office of the Special Representative and Co-ordinator for Combating THB, together with the Supreme Court of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the OSCE Project Co-ordinator in Uzbekistan, convened a group of high-level judges to discuss the role of the judiciary in combating THB. During their conversations, it was emphasised that greater attention should be given to collecting and analysing gender-disaggregated data to enable the judiciary to better understand and respond to gender dynamics as they relate to perpetrators of trafficking.¹⁸⁰

ADVOCATING GENDER-SENSITIVE PROSECUTION through the OSCE Special Representative's country visits

During their country visits, the OSCE Special Representatives for Combating THB have noted with concern the low rates of prosecution and conviction for THB across the OSCE region, in particular in Western Europe. According to the findings of their country visits, these low rates of THB convictions are often due to overreliance on victim testimonies, lack of credible evidence, and the changing modus operandi of criminal groups. Such groups have moved online and have begun to use more non-violent techniques to control and exploit people. The lover-boy method is frequently cited as a prime recruitment method used by traffickers to lure girls and young women into sexual exploitation through feigned romantic relationships. However, this subtle means of coercion does not mean that trafficking is not involved. The challenges reflected in the low prosecution and conviction numbers indicate that all involved practitioners – investigators, prosecutors and judges – need additional training so they understand various trafficking techniques and connected gendered patterns.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In recent years, considerable attention has been paid to the gender dimension of THB. This attention has been translated into programmes, policies and laws. However, not least due to the ever-changing patterns and trends of THB, many gender aspects of this crime remain hidden and unaddressed in the existing strategies for prevention, protection and prosecution. It was established in the present Study that gender-sensitive approaches in response to the crime of THB are still being applied inadequately. The Study also revealed how complex it is to implement practical gender-sensitive approaches towards the crime and to develop comprehensive gender-sensitive anti-trafficking policies in the OSCE region.

Taking into account both the promising practices and problem areas identified in this Study, this chapter focuses on identifying possible ways to advance gender-sensitive anti-trafficking work and to improve the application of existing programmes. When considering the below recommendations, OSCE participating States are invited to embrace the broad range of possibilities for implementing gender-sensitive approaches, approaches not only limited to the protection needs of female victims in sexual exploitation and male victims in labour exploitation, but encompassing many possible actions in the area of prevention and prosecution as well.

To effectively apply gender-sensitive approaches in line with the OSCE participating States' commitments, strengthened political will and investment in the provision of support to all victim groups are required. Moreover, it should be reiterated that ensuring that laws, policies and programmes address the specific needs of victims that have so far been marginalized should not undermine the hard-won attention and resources dedicated to the most detected groups of victims. There is a necessity to increase specialized protection for all victims through a comprehensive application of gender-sensitive approaches.



Area 1: Data collection and production of knowledge

It is important to emphasize that there is a lack of data on the role played by gender in different forms of trafficking. This impacts the ability to develop and implement adequate prevention, protection and prosecution strategies. A review of existing literature on the gender dimension of THB has identified a lack of gender-focused research on labour trafficking and other non-sexual forms of trafficking. This limits the understanding of who victims are, what makes them vulnerable, and what needs they have. The common association of women with sexual exploitation and men with labour exploitation overlooks the role of gender in the exploitation of men and women in sectors not consistent with this picture (e.g. men in sexual exploitation and women in labour exploitation). The usual associations undermine effective responses to victims' gender-specific needs.

Due to the constant shifts in the trends and patterns of trafficking, regular research on gender aspects in THB is needed. This can play a key role in supporting the development of prevention, protection and prosecution strategies that are in sync with the actual experiences of victims of trafficking and their needs. Research that seeks to move beyond stereotypical views of victimhood and gender can inform the development of programmes and allocation of resources that address the consequences of trafficking for both sexual and non-sexual purposes and that respond adequately to the needs of all victims. Improving collection of gender-disaggregated data and promoting targeted qualitative research are thus the first building block of a gender-sensitive policy response.

Recommendations

- **Promote proactive data collection mechanisms to gather gender-disaggregated data, with an emphasis on under-researched areas;**
- **Carry out in-depth qualitative research to examine the nexus between gender and trafficking situations, in particular less visible forms of trafficking such as domestic servitude and organ removal, as well as the sexual exploitation of men and boys as well as other persons who do not fit the *ideal victim* profile.**



Area 2: Capacity building and addressing biases in the anti-trafficking response

A major problem highlighted in the Study is that knowledge of THB is often based on stereotypical ideas of trafficking, especially the most visible forms of exploitation and already identified victims. The lesser visibility of certain forms of exploitation, such as domestic servitude or trafficking for the purpose of organ removal, obstructs our view of the full scope of trafficking. Moreover, historically and socially, victimhood status has been based on stereotypical views that link gender to specific forms of exploitation. This has steered attention away from less predictable and more unusual forms of trafficking. Rarer types of exploitation, such as exploitation in hidden settings, are thus less likely to be found, as are victims with uncommon profiles who are being exploited in non-corresponding sectors. By extension, this poses a challenge to understanding and responding comprehensively to the entire scope of THB. Lack of knowledge and methods to deal with such diversity hinders adequate prevention and detection work. Stereotypical views carry the danger of law enforcement and protection programmes overlooking certain types of risks and offenders. The Study has also shown that the lack of adequate gender-sensitive approaches throughout the criminal justice process impacts not only how victims are treated, but also the outcome of prosecution cases.

Recommendations

- **Build knowledge of anti-trafficking actors to increase their capacity to address gender biases, identify non-ideal victim profiles, and adequately respond to the needs of all victims, in line with the OSCE participating States' gender-related obligations, including through the development of effective National Referral Mechanisms;**
- **Strengthen victim-centred and gender-sensitive training of law enforcement and judicial professionals;**
- **Promote female career development in criminal justice systems and male representation in social services to improve interaction with both male and female victims.**



Area 3: Needs-based intervention for underserved populations

The Study highlighted the lack of resources needed to provide all victims with tailored assistance that meets individual needs. Significant gaps have been identified notably in less visible exploitation sectors, such as domestic servitude and forced marriage, where the majority of identified victims are women and girls. Despite the fact that women and girls in sexual exploitation represent the most prevalent group of detected victims, they also continue to lack access to specialized and critically needed services.

While male victims have increasingly emerged on anti-trafficking agendas, attention and support to this victim group is still lacking in all of the three pillars of prevention, protection and prosecution. Over the last 15 years, the share of detected male victims of trafficking has more than doubled. They now represent 35% of detected trafficking victims worldwide, with up to 49% in Western and Southern Europe.¹⁸¹ It is essential that appropriate attention is given to the vulnerabilities contributing to male victimization, as well as men's needs after exploitation. Similarly, one of the most hidden forms of THB is the sexual exploitation of boys and men. This invisibility is largely due to the taboos and stigmas associated with this form of trafficking, as well as the fact that sexual crime victims are often exclusively associated with women and girls. Study participants also reported that victims of trafficking who do not fit the stereotypical *ideal victim* profile receive very little attention and are therefore subject to double victimization. Given that so little is known about the extent and scope of the victimization of such individuals, the push and pull factors and post-exploitation needs of this victim group have not yet been adequately identified or addressed.

This paper has also highlighted that gender alone does not define risk or susceptibility to victimization. There are other intersecting factors that play a role in the victimization process, such as age, hardship (including unemployment, immigration status, disability, illness, substance abuse or homelessness), ethnicity or racial belonging.

Recommendations

- **Develop interventions to offer prevention and protection services adapted to the needs of all victims, in particular those who are less likely to come forward. Tailored assistance should take into account victims' gender-specific needs according to the type of harm and exploitation to which they were subjected;**
- **Consider conducting multi-agency mapping of high-risk sectors to better tailor interventions to the needs of victims;**
- **Review national legislation and policies to ensure that they cover the protection needs of all victims;**
- **Promote the use of an intersectionality lens, taking into consideration the different contributing factors in order to develop holistic and effective prevention and protection strategies, including through the use of National Referral Mechanisms;**
- **Address the risk of double victimization by designing rights-based prevention and assistance programmes that are based on the individual vulnerabilities and needs of victims or potential victims.**



Area 4: Awareness-raising and youth education

Anti-trafficking campaigns play a crucial role in educating the public about the nature and scope of THB. In such campaigns, voices of survivors are central to creating a trafficking narrative and eliciting responses from both policy makers and the general public. It is therefore important to produce anti-trafficking campaigns that cover all types of victims, not only the *ideal victim*. Stereotypical representations can be harmful to identification processes and to victims themselves. While attention to THB can be attracted by images of naked or scantily dressed women who are chained, roped, packaged as goods or branded with barcodes, such images can limit a comprehensive awareness of THB, and can also be very harmful to victims. They can make victims relive their experiences, damage victims' self-worth by seeing how they appear to the public, or lead to their victimhood being dismissed if their situation was different than the images.

Harmful masculinities have been identified as a factor contributing to demand for sexual services, which in turn fosters trafficking for sexual exploitation. Targeted awareness-raising intervention can help lay a foundation for empowering and educating youth on how to unlearn and prevent such behaviours.

Recommendations

- **Raise awareness among anti-trafficking organizations, law enforcement and the general public to stretch the boundaries of the *ideal victim* paradigm and give more attention to victims less likely to be identified, such as men and boys in sexual exploitation, and women and girls in labour exploitation;**
- **Develop methodologies to help design campaigns that do not reinforce the image of the *ideal victim* or hierarchies of victimhood, but instead examine aspects of gender in THB that are usually unaccounted for or invisible;**
- **Incorporate information about both harmful and positive masculinities into sex education curricula in schools, and develop awareness-raising campaigns for parents and legal guardians;**
- **Mainstream gender equality in education and develop transformative strategies to promote the engagement of men and boys in tackling discriminatory stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, and address the root causes of gender biases and violence against women.**

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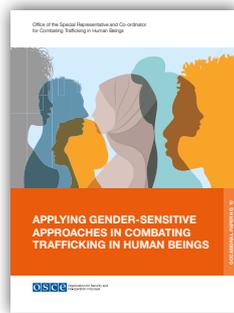
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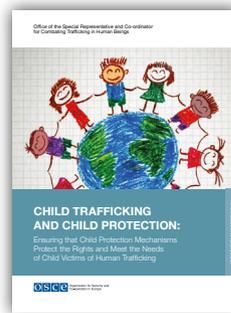
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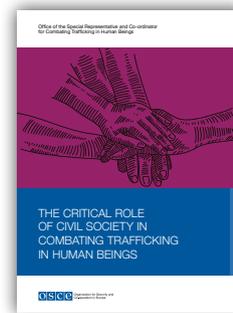
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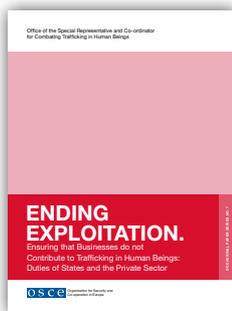
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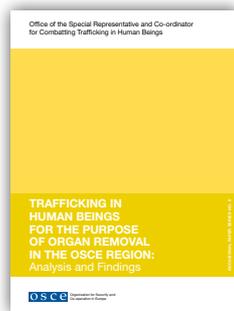
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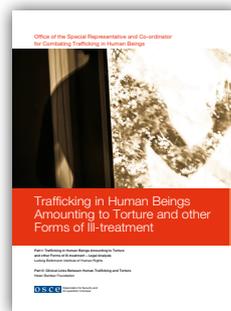
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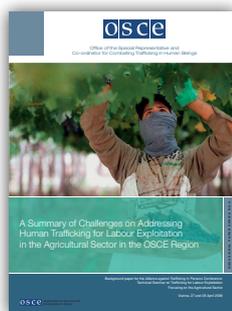
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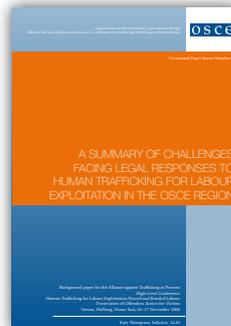
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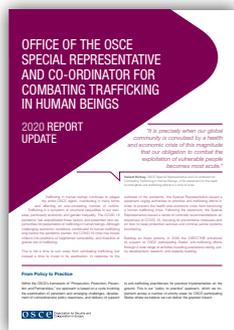


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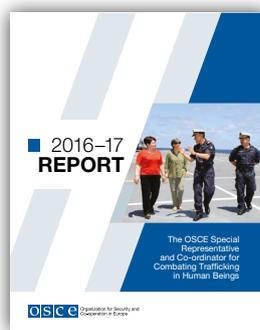
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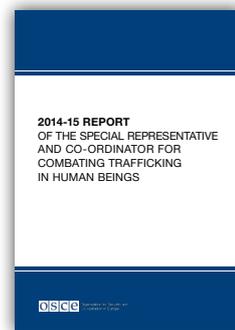
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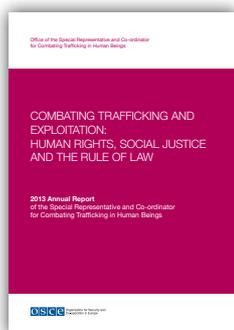
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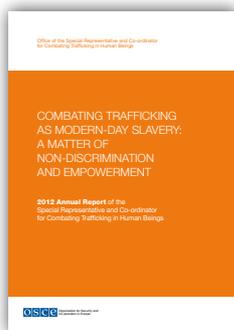
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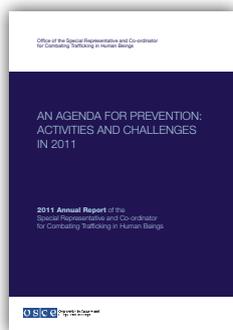
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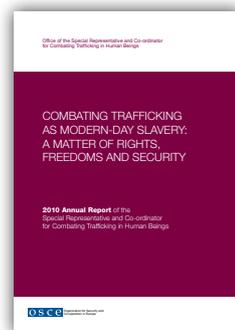
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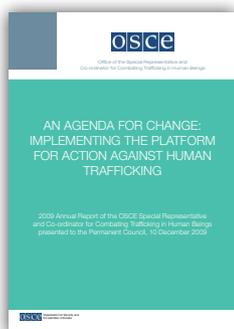
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 Combating Trafficking as Modern-day Slavery: A Matter of Rights, Freedoms and Security
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<https://www.osce.org/cthb/40765>

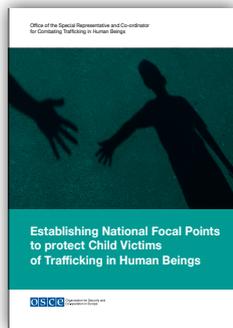


Annual Report 2008
 Efforts to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings in the OSCE Area: Co-ordination and Reporting Mechanisms
<https://www.osce.org/cthb/36159>

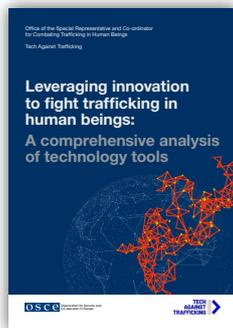


Annual Report 2007
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<https://www.osce.org/cthb/29588>

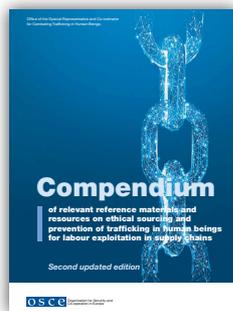
Other Publications



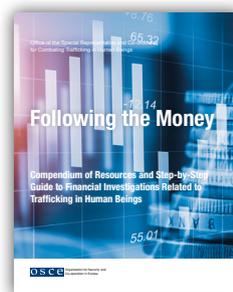
2020
Establishing National Focal Points to Protect Child Victims of Trafficking in Human Beings
<https://www.osce.org/cthb/472305>



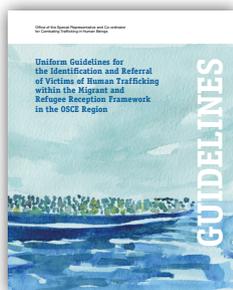
2020
Leveraging innovation to fight trafficking in human beings: A comprehensive analysis of technology tools
<https://www.osce.org/cthb/455206>



2020
Compendium of relevant reference materials and resources on ethical sourcing and prevention of trafficking in human beings for labour exploitation in supply chains
<https://www.osce.org/cthb/450769>



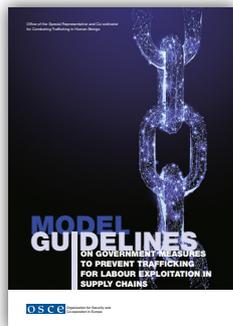
2019
Following the Money: Compendium of Resources and Step-by-Step Guide to Financial Investigations Related to Trafficking in Human Beings
<https://www.osce.org/cthb/438323>



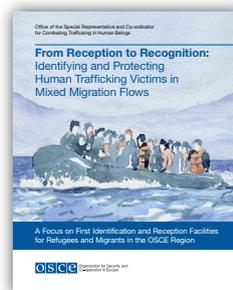
2019
Uniform Guidelines for the Identification and Referral of Victims of Human Trafficking within the Migrant and Refugee Reception Framework in the OSCE Region
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2019
Compendium of Anti-Trafficking Commitments adopted by the OSCE Ministerial Council
<https://www.osce.org/cthb/440786>



2018
Model Guidelines on Government Measures to Prevent Trafficking for Labour Exploitation in Supply Chains
<https://www.osce.org/cthb/371771>



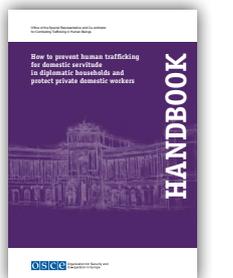
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From Reception to Recognition: Identifying and Protecting Human Trafficking Victims in Mixed Migration Flows
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2016
Commentary to the OSCE Action Plan to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings (EN/RU)
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Survey Report 2016
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/289951>



2014
Handbook: How to Prevent Human Trafficking for Domestic Servitude in Diplomatic Households and Protect Private Domestic Workers (EN/FR/ES)
<https://www.osce.org/handbook/domesticservitude>



2013
Policy and legislative recommendations towards the effective implementation of the non-punishment provision with regard to victims of trafficking
<https://www.osce.org/secretariat/101002>

The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe works for stability, prosperity and democracy in 57 States through political dialogue about shared values and through practical work that makes a lasting difference.

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