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TEMVI
Trafficked and Exploited
Minors between Vulnerability and
Illegality

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**Forced criminal activities as a new form of exploitation in
human trafficking: knowledge and human rights based
practices**

Experimentation Report

WP4 Testing defined practices in Italy¹



¹ This document was drawn up by professional social workers operating in the Municipality of Venice, within the Service Unit for social inclusion and humanitarian protection, Directorate for social policies and inclusion, providing acceptance support in partnership with the Human Rights Centre of the University of Padua. The document is also based on input and information provided by the Project Partners who shared the experimentation.

INTRODUCTION

The TEMVI Project on *Trafficked and Exploited Minors between Vulnerability and Illegality. Forced Criminal Activities as a New Form of Exploitation in Human Trafficking: Knowledge and Human Rights Based Practices through Pilot Research and Multi-Agency Training and Prototype-Procedures*² strives to:

- raise awareness and knowledge about new or lesser known forms of trafficking in human beings (or severe exploitation) as for instance forced criminal activities;
- set up more inclusive sustainable systems capable of supporting and protecting the victims of trafficking, with the involvement of institutional actors and the private sector in all the most significant operative procedures, reconsidering the overall role played by multi-agency activity, seeing the characteristics of current migratory flows, the latest targets that have emerged, the most updated approaches in exploitation management, and the latest EU prescriptions in terms of public policy and laws;
- thus define partnerships at all levels (private, public, nongovernmental) with significant actors capable of tackling, from an ample perspective, the vast challenges

² This document integrates the Project's final Report to different National reports which can be found from the webpage: <http://unipd-centrodirittiumani.it/en/attivita/Final-Reports/1090>. The European Project "TEMVI: Trafficked and Exploited Minors between Vulnerability and Illegality. Forced criminal activities as a new form of exploitation in human trafficking: knowledge and human rights based practices (HOME/2013/ISEC/AG/THB/4000005491)", funded by the European Commission and coordinated by the University of Padua, Human Rights Centre which conducts research, provides education and training, develops multi-agency operative practices to combat situations of severe exploitation and trafficking of minors within forced criminal activities.

The actions foreseen by the project for 2014-2016 include:

- research and analysis on the impact of trafficking to be exploited in forced criminal activities, within the Countries that are participating in this Project, and monitoring of the interventions adopted throughout these territories;
- data collection, analysis and exchange of practices to develop an Ideal Prototype capable of detection-identification, alert reports and providing protection/shelter for the minors who have been subjected to forced criminal activities and who may be the potential victims of severe forms of exploitation;
- multi-agency education and training to define the operative protocol models between social service operators and law enforcement professionals; experimentation of such practices in Italy in the Triveneto area;
- awareness raising activities which also include making videos/commercials;
- the drafting of a national report for each partner Countries (France, Italy, Hungary and Romania) and of a final di Project Report written in English, aimed at all those who operate in the anti-trafficking system.

The Project comprises an extensive network of national and international partners. Foreign co-beneficiaries include the following entities: Association ALC in France, Hungarian Baptist Aid in Hungary, the ADPARE Association in Romania. In Italy, the Municipality of Venice, with its Services promoting social inclusion– social humanitarian protection, Directorate of social and participatory policies and of safe protection, as well as a series of private social entities which for years have been involved in protecting the victims of severe forms of exploitation and trafficking as: Equality, Volontarius, Nuovi Vicini, La Strada - DerWeg and Azalea.

The partnership also includes: Comunità dei Giovani; Ministry of Justice - National Anti-Mafia Directorate; the Autonomous Province of Trento – Cinformi Italia Labour and Welfare Department; Cooperative Gruppo R; Autonomous Province of Bolzano; Cooperative Punto d'Approdo; Caritas dell'Arcidiocesi in Udine; La Tenda Onlus; Welcome Association; International Organization for Migration – Mission in Hungary; Municipality of Trento - Social Services.

that human trafficking poses with the objective of exchanging best practices in terms of identifying cases that involve this particular phenomenon—whose manifestation can take on many forms and involve multiple parties that go beyond an ordinary multi-agency work dimension as defined for other targets;

- define guidelines for cooperative agreements, aimed at identifying and prosecuting offences, at protecting and supporting the victims, seeing the specificity involved in working with such a target group and the fact that it involves a minor who often may even have committed a crime;
- develop initiatives geared at preventing human trafficking and at protecting, assisting and supporting the victims of trafficking by adopting a victim-centred approach that is coherent with human rights principles and those that regulate this domain; provide greater information to the groups that may be vulnerable to trafficking, especially the women and children who are at risk, domestic workers, the Roma community and irregular workers; all of the above not only in recognition of the central role of the victims, but even from the gender perspective and for the child's best interest.

The experimental action (*WP4 Testing defined practices in Italy*) stems from the design of an operative protocol model oriented towards a multi-agency approach in assisting the victims of forced criminal activities, in particular Roma minors, accomplished by organizing workshops in the four Project Partner States, Italy-France-Romania-Hungary, to enable those involved in the procedure to validate contents to then potentially adopt them in the various countries. Such protocols, the way they were conceived in terms of the entities involved and their *modus operandi* towards other forms of severe exploitation prove to be innovative. The experimental practices and the Protocol Draft arose from a multi-agency training action (*WP3 Multi-agency training and definition of multi-agency protocol patterns*), a preparatory phase to the experimental approach, conducted through a series of training modules and workshops, organized by the Project Partners in each of the four States, with the participation of social workers, the Police and law enforcement officers and other stakeholders, designed to identify human rights and multi agency orientated operative practices.

The Project, with its propaedeutic training action which preceded the experimental phase, has enabled a reflection on the phenomenon of severe forms of exploitation and to examine forced criminal activities as an unquestionably important domain for certain targets and for specific traditionally vulnerable categories of trafficking:

- assessing the multi-agency approach even in trafficking related issues which to date have still remained relatively unexplored and have not been considered, adopting adequate as well as specific measures and policies, as foreseen at the national and European level;
- the reinforcement of multi-agency actions and strengthening coordination among the various figures operating within social services and the Police in detecting, identifying, referring and guaranteeing initial assistance to Roma minors who may be the victims of forced criminal activities;
- an identification of operational practices and of the roles related to the detection, identification, referral and providing aid to Roma minors involved in forced criminal activities.

The experimentation, implemented from December 2015 until June 2016, involved putting into practice and verifying how well the Operative Procedures, defined during the training sessions and consolidated through workshops on Operative Protocols performed, with the goal of detecting, identifying and assisting 29 potential victims of trafficking³ in the Triveneto area, based on new procedures set out by the Idealtipe Prototype⁴ (which resulted from *WP2 Joint analysis of research data results about trafficking and identification/definition of operative practices*).

The objective was to test and validate the operative provisions and practices that would be implemented in the Triveneto area and within the existing activity related to the protection to the victims of trafficking and severe forms of exploitation, assessing the chance of transferring multi-agency protocol models when detecting, identifying, referring, and providing initial assistance to minors (particularly Roma youths) who are the victims of trafficking into forced criminality.

The Idealtipe Prototype has led to the development of an innovative victim-centred procedure aimed at protecting, assisting and supporting the victims of trafficking contributing to in-depth knowledge and greater awareness of the people who may fall prey to forced criminal activities.

³ The Project initially foreseen the detection – identification and assistance to 15 potential victims in the Triveneto area and adoption, for these minors, of the Procedures that have been set out by the Idealtipe Prototype.

⁴ A detailed description of the Idealtipe Prototype found in the Final Report (pages 62 to 73) is available on-line consulting the different national versions from the webpage: <http://unipd-centrodirittiumani.it/en/attivita/Final-Reports/1090>.

THE EXPERIMENTATION

The Triveneto area, of the various Italian human trafficking interventions systems, starting in the nineteen nineties, has implemented an important consolidated support and protection system to help the victims of trafficking and combat criminal organizations. The Municipality of Venice, a Partner in the TEMVI Project and coordinator of this experimental initiative, manages the national phonenumber service (800290290) to support the victims of trafficking, on behalf of the Department for Equal Opportunities of the Italian Presidency of the Council of Ministers. Lately, notable experience has been gained on the phenomenon of human trafficking, acting as a local body providing public management services which, in the past, had significantly contributed in offering not only to support and guarantee assistance to the victims, with the goal of achieving their empowerment and social reintegration, but even to gain greater insight on such phenomena in the various countries and to monitor them in collaboration with the Human Rights Centre of the University of Padua.

All actions developed within the TEMVI Project are focused on a human rights paradigm and on a multi-agency approach, as illustrated by all of the latest most important documents of European Institutions and as specifically foreseen by the Project.

The experimentation activity has enabled to design a system that is capable of detecting and identifying multi-agency practices, aimed specifically at the trafficking of children or victims of severe forms of exploitation who are forced into criminality, with particular focus on underage Roma, reinforcing existing anti-trafficking networks and cooperating with subjects which have never been involved. This was possible thanks to the training that saw the participation of different law enforcement professionals in charge of different tasks and interventions as well as the social service sector, oriented to support those who are vulnerable to trafficking and would normally not be intercepted or directly involved in other forms of trafficking.

To this end, the experimental phase represented the opportunity to test the Idealtipe Prototype in the Triveneto area, and specifically in the context of the system of interventions for the victims of trafficking which has been already operative in this territory since many years.

The experimental procedure was supervised by the University of Padua and was led by: the Municipality of Venice – the Service Promoting Social Inclusion, the Cooperative

Equality and the Cooperative Azalea in Veneto; the Association Volontarius and the Association La strada DerWeg in Trentino Alto Adige; and the Cooperative Nuovi Vicini in Friuli Venezia Giulia. In the planning phase prior to the experimental phase, the Partners met regularly, in particular for multi-agency training modules which proved pivotal in understanding the phenomenon, to discuss procedures, share views and know-how on operative practices and to reinforce the network. The Municipality of Venice had organized two operative meetings for its Partners after having launched the experimental phase on 04/02/2016, and in its final phase on 21/06/2016 to monitor the work that had been carried out throughout the territories involved. This was done with the understanding that in Italy this Project strove to “pave the way” and to reflect on Operative Procedures dealing with a targets of victims that for far too long have remained in the shade or whose profile to date is still little known.

Actions in the experimental phase consisted in:

- **Raising awareness** among relevant stakeholders to encourage greater knowledge of the Project and of the dedicated phonenumber as a means to alert and activate the procedures set out by the Ideatype Prototype;
- **mapping** of the population that may potentially be at risk in social-pedagogical units and assisted homes for minors (16-21 year olds) in particular, in the Province of Bolzano, identifying a group of individuals who may be vulnerable to being exploited in forced criminal activities;
- **activation** of a referral system and of the anti-trafficking unit in cases where a youth emerges as a potential victim of forced criminal activities (applying the Ideatype Prototype);
- **interviews** to assess and gain greater insight, from different settings, and in the presence of cultural mediators (applying the Ideatype Prototype and collecting personal data for the preliminary identification phase);
- planning the interventions related to **first assistance** and **protection** (applying Ideatype Prototype);

Results achieved

The activities aimed at **raising awareness** include the organization of several meetings and specific events to help disseminate the TEMVI Project.

In particular, the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region hosted a meeting in collaboration with the Lawyer's Association inviting law enforcement professionals and public authorities from Pordenone (the Governor (*Prefetto*), the head of the Police (*Questore*), the Councillor for Public Security) with the participation of the University of Padua (prof. Paola Degani presented the Project and the issues related to trafficking for the purpose of forced criminal activities, framing the phenomenon as one that is closely connected to severe exploitation), the Municipality of Venice and the Guarantor of the Friuli Venezia Giulia Region for people that risk discrimination, with 26 participants. From January to June 2016, Friuli Venezia Giulia hosted 19 awareness raising meetings, reaching out to 43 stakeholders belonging to sectors related to Law Enforcement, the Prefectural offices, Public Prosecution, Services for Juvenile Justice, Juvenile Social Services, and workers who operate within the international protection system.

In the Province of Bolzano, the TEMVI Project was presented in the context of the meetings of the Territorial Working Group. Held in March and June of 2016, these meetings saw the participation of the following stakeholders: Volontarius Association, EOS social Coop., Comunità Murialdo, the social District of Merano, Social Integration Service of the Bolzano Social Office/Agency, the Municipal Police, Sozialgenossenschaft Vinshgau, the Autonomous Province of Bolzano – Social Inclusion and Child Protection Office, the Juvenile Office of the Police of Bolzano, the State Police Investigation Unit, II section, Bolzano, and Juvenile Area of Volontarius Association. The agenda focused on the phenomenon of trafficking and on severe forms of exploitation in the Province of Bolzano, with a presentation and discussion of the Ideatype Prototype, a presentation and discussion of the Operative Protocol Draft, illustration of the indicator check-list to identify and assess the social background of the victims and planning local intervention strategies.

In Veneto, awareness raising meetings were held mainly in the cities of Verona, Padua and Venice. They were oriented to those working in: Juvenile Social Services and the (USSM) Juvenile Social Service, educators of the Juvenile Detention Institute in Treviso, the

Centre for Juvenile Justice, Law Enforcement professionals (the Carabinieri, Local Police, Polfer, and the State Police First Intervention Squad and Investigation Unit).

- The **mapping** of the population at risk contributed to the emergence of:
 - a) Foreign unaccompanied minors of Albanian nationality (8 boys). Following the commission of certain offences, in particular, stealing in shelter units, hostility and threats, fighting and severe aggravated assaults (stabbing) by foreign unaccompanied minors of Albanian nationality against other foreign minors or the shelters hosting them in the provincial territory, the Juvenile shelter network called CRAIS (which coordinates socio-pedagogical units in the Province of Bolzano) was promptly alerted and informed about the TEMVI Project. The CRAIS was informed of the possibility to held interviews that can potentially lead to a preliminary identification of the victim;
 - b) Foreign unaccompanied minors of Nigerian nationality (1 boy, 2 girls). The network responded to cases involving minors of Nigerian nationality suspected of being victims of trafficking. The Contact Unit of the ALBA Evaluation Project, under Association Volontarius, has been immediately contacted to conduct interviews to identify the victims. The outcomes for the underage males were negative whereas the outcome for the underage girls is still uncertain, although the type of exploitation they were engaged in turned out to be sexual exploitation in street prostitution;
 - c) Inter-ethnic group of minors involved in micro-criminality, a case of the so-called “baby gangs” (of about 15 individuals) under the attention of the Public Prosecution for Juveniles in Bolzano which, for several months, had investigated a group of fifteen minors, aged 11 to 16 who, in the months of February and March 2016, were responsible of assaults, theft and armed robbery. Two of them, both aged sixteen, ended up in Treviso’s Juvenile Detention Centre: one was accused of robbing at a supermarket and the other of extortion. Initially, as the crime was thought to have been orchestrated by an adult, the Association decided to alert and report the episodes to the Juveniles Unit at the Police headquarters of Bolzano, presenting the TEMVI Project.

- **Activation of the referral system**, by the activation of anti-trafficking hotline by the State Police First Intervention Squad of the Police in Venice and Verona, the Carabinieri in Venice San Marco, the Carabinieri of Padua, Polfer (Police Units operating in railways) in Venezia Mestre and the Municipal Police of Venice;
- The TEMVI Project, within its experimental timeframe, has activated a **Territorial Anti-trafficking Unit**, from December 2015 until June 2016, but even prior to this period, when defining the activities within the Ideatype Prototype, and during training for the multi-agency working. The cases that emerged in Veneto alone, in particular in Venice and Verona, involved a total of **29 minors** (16 in the pre-experimental phase, 14 in the experimental phase which include a juvenile girl who had already been designated in previous activation phases). Of the 29 minors which emerged, 20 were girls and 9 were boys, all were caught red handed and not carrying any documents on them. The minors, in 10 cases claimed to be of Bosnian nationality, 11 Croatian, 4 Romanian, 2 Tunisians and 1 Bulgarian. Apart from two Tunisian minors and one girl from Bulgaria, all the other youths claimed to be Roma and 12 of them, all girls, reported to be Roma and to be living with family in Rome in a camp located on via Pontina. Each of the 12 underage girls, reported to the Local Police and to the Juvenile Prosecution, was stopped and caught for pickpocketing, on average 3.2 times between June 2015 and June 2016 with peaks that ranged from six to five consecutive times in the summer months of 2015. In terms of age group, 16 minors claimed to be between 11 and 14 years of age, 11 claimed to be between 15 and 17 years of age, 2 of them had just turned 18, following a period of detention were at the Juvenile Detention Centre in Treviso (*Istituto Penale per i Minorenni di Treviso - IPM*) for an offence they had committed while underage.
- In all these cases, the **operational assessments and protection procedures defined by the Ideatype Prototype** were followed. The anti-trafficking territorial unit was alerted through the National phonenumber by the Police and law enforcement officials at the time of the criminal offence, pickpocketing or robbery, except in the case of two Tunisian youths whose alert came from Juvenile Social workers and the Juvenile Detention Centre in Treviso. Following activation, an interview was carried out and, as prescribed by the Juvenile Prosecutor, the minor was offered safe accommodation, managed mostly by a Partner of this experimental procedure, Coop. Equality, whose operators conduct a second interview and propose protection and aid to the youth in

the medium term. When a group of minors (two or three at the same time) is identified, consideration goes into whether to differentiate their safe residential treatment. In all the cases where minors were caught while committing an offence, except for one case, and were provided with safe shelter, they soon fled their shelter. The territorial anti-trafficking unit is therefore alerted informing the competent Judiciary Authority. In one particular case of a Croatian girl who requested aid and protection, as defined jointly with the territorial Juvenile Social Services, protective custody was prescribed by the Youth Court. The meetings and interviews with the minors conducted by various operators, using a multi-agency approach, served to verify whether the information provided by the end beneficiaries to the various operators was congruous. It also helped in the data collection in order to build a database and organigramme of the groups of minors involved in criminal activities in the Venetian territory.

CONCLUSIONS

Experimental activities have enabled us to reach a greater number of minors within the TEMVI Project compared to what was envisaged (29 compared to the 15 that had been foreseen). The problems and difficulties experienced herein include the following:

- lack of expertise with this target group within the system of intervention for victims of trafficking and therefore the need to fill this gap through an action-oriented perspective shared among the Partners on the new peculiarities the phenomenon of trafficking presents and on the procedures that have to be activated and operate effectively with these victims;
- the methods applied by Law Enforcement officers for such cases to emerge are non canonical making it difficult to identify the minors who are subjected to severe forms of exploitation;
- minors tend to apply a negative stereotype and not to trust Social Services (with attitudes of marked provocation, disdain and accusation of racial discrimination);
- a non-collaborative attitude and self-representation of oneself as a victim;
- minors are especially well skilled in the criminal activities they perform, even within the age group of fourteen year olds, and in the capacity to timely escape from the shelters. These are behaviours normally associated with this target in that they

- reinforce their abilities and attitudes needed to perform such illegal acts;
- problems related to young age groups which does not enable the anti-trafficking system to operate on its own but which requires the synergy of the Services that work with youths;
 - difficulty in tracing the minor's family nucleus and to verify the actual correspondence of the information provided even in terms of fulfilling institutional obligations, such as the rights to education guaranteed by the minors' families and the concerned territorial institution.

The prototype known as "Prototype Idealtipe " has proven to be a useful instrument that has enabled a reflection on multi-agency work in this particular domain involving human trafficking, which specifically involves minors forced into criminal activities. What emerged in dealing with trafficking is that any intervention system must involve different operators who work in tandem with the young offenders, with the Services Protecting Minors, as well as with Social Services that work on integration and on contrasting discrimination against Roma, Sinti and Caminanti.

The Idealtipe Prototype and the Operative Protocols elaborated by the TEMVI Project potentially create new space for future interventions to:

- continue the multi-agency work thus reinforcing relations with all Partners as well as introducing new interlocutors;
- create a common observatory, defining the instruments and the inter-agency communication channels, in territorial round tables (local, national and transnational) that prompt discussions and a comparison of the differences;
- promote active participation of Juvenile Prosecutors;
- identify, through the participation of the multi-agency network, the strategies or alternative mechanisms to place the victims in shelters, even through new forms of research-action;
- promote and implement crime prevention aimed at minors, their family in synergy with social services and the local community.

SUSTAINABILITY

Research, awareness raising campaigns, support activities to combat trafficking and help in the detection, identification and assistance for the victims which implement the experimental Prototype and the Operative Procedures realized during the TEMVI Project could go on in the framework of projects funded by the Italian National Plan to Combat Trafficking and, more in general, in the context of all the national and local systems aimed at guaranteeing support for the victims of trafficking. The TEMVI Project has propelled greater focus on multi-agency work with the aim to codify operative procedures in the areas of identification and protection. The procedures can be even translated into Operative Protocols, based on the model identified at the time of the workshops using the Prototype within the four States that have taken part in the Project.

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