



Mind the Gap Report: COALESCE for Support in Germany

Needs analysis for the integration of migrant female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation/abuse



Funded by the European Union's
Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund



SOLWODI
Solidarity with women in distress
Solidarität mit Frauen in Not

Mind the Gap Report: COALESCE for Support in Germany

Needs analysis for the integration of migrant female victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation/abuse

The COALESCE project

This report is produced for the EU funded project "COALESCE: Legal, Psycho-social and economic empowerment for the integration of women third country nationals (TCN) victims of human trafficking (VoT) for sexual exploitation and abuse" EC AMIF: 958133), led by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) (Cyprus), in partnership with the Immigrant Council of Ireland (ICI) (Ireland), Caritas Cyprus, Cyprus Refugee Council, *SOLWODI Deutschland e.V.* (SOLWODI) (Germany), *Associazione Iroko Onlus* (Italy), *Marta Centre* (Latvia), *Klaipeda Social and Psychological Services Center* (KSPSC) (Lithuania), and the European Network of Migrant Women (ENOMW) - a European platform based in Belgium.

COALESCE implements support services for victims of trafficking in human beings: providing gender-specific psycho-social, legal and economic support and assistance to third-country national women victims of sex trafficking, and develops synergies and complementarities in facilitating needs identification, assistance and support, and improves transnational cooperation among front line professionals and practitioners. COALESCE's aim is to place the voices and authentic opinions of trafficked women at the centre of implementation.

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List of Abbreviations

ACTIVATE	enhancing the anti-Trafficking Identification, prevention And support mechanisms
AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
AnKER	<i>Zentrum für Ankunft, Entscheidung, Rückführung</i> (Centre for Arrival, Decision, Repatriation)
ASSIST	Gender Specific Legal Assistance and Integration Support for Third Country National Female Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation
AsylbLG	<i>Asylbewerberleistungsgesetz</i> (Asylum Seekers' Benefits Act)
AufenthG	<i>Aufenthaltsgesetz</i> (Residence Act)
BAföG	<i>Bundesausbildungsförderungsgesetz</i> (Federal Training Assistance Act)
BAMF	<i>Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge</i> (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees)
BEMA	<i>Berliner Beratungszentrum für Migration und Gute Arbeit</i> (Berlin Counselling Centre for Migration and Good Work)
BeschVO	<i>Beschäftigungsverordnung</i> (Employment Ordinance)
Bff	<i>Bundesverband der Frauenberatungsstellen und Frauennotrufe in Deutschland</i> (Federal Association of Women's Counselling Centres and Women's Emergency Centres in Germany)
BAK	<i>Bundeskriminalamt</i> (Federal Criminal Police Office)
BKGG	<i>Bundeskindergeldgesetz</i> (Federal Child Benefit Act)
BMFSFJ	Bundesministerium für Familie, Senioren, Frauen und Jugend (Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth)
CCM-GBV	Co-creating a counselling method for refugee women GBV victims
COALESCE	Legal, Psycho-social and economic empowerment for the integration of women third country nationals victims of human trafficking for sexual exploitation and abuse
Coe	Council of Europe
EASO	European Asylum Support Office
ECPAT	End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes
EEM	Economic Empowerment Model
ENOMW	European Network of Migrant Women
EstG	<i>Einkommensteuergesetz</i> (Income Tax Act)
FGM	Female Genital Mutilation
GeSIM	Gender-Specific Integration Model
GG	<i>Grundgesetz</i> (Basic Law)
GGMH	<i>Gemeinsam gegen Menschenhandel e.V.</i> (Together against human trafficking association)
GIPST	German Integration Program for Survivors of Trafficking
HiFF	<i>Hilfsnetzwerk für besonders schutzbedürftige Flüchtlinge in der Diözese Augsburg</i> (Aid network for particularly vulnerable refugees in the diocese of Augsburg)
ICI	Immigrant Council of Ireland
ILO	International Labour Organization
INTAP	INTERsectional APproach to the process of integration in Europe for survivors of human trafficking from Nigeria and China, particularly women and mothers
IOM	International Organization for Migration

KOK	<i>Bundesweiter Koordinierungskreis gegen Menschenhandel e.V.</i> (German Network and Coordination Office Against Trafficking In Human Beings)
KSPSC	Klaipeda Social and Psychological Services Center
LIBES	Life Beyond the Shelter - Long-term support for survivors of human trafficking transitioning from shelter life to independence
MIGS	Mediterranean Institute for Gender Studies
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
PLM	Psycho-social & legal support model
ProstSchG	<i>Prostituiertenschutzgesetz</i> (Prostitution Protection Act)
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SGB	<i>Sozialgesetzbuch</i> (Social Security Code)
SOLWODI	SOLidarity with WOmen in DIstress
SoT	Survivors of Trafficking
StGB	<i>Strafgesetzbuch</i> (Penal Code)
STI	Sexually transmitted infections
THB	Trafficking in human beings
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Table of content

Introduction.....	6
The COALESCE project	6
The Mind the Gap Report	7
Methodology	8
Literature review.....	8
Guideline-based interviews.....	9
Interview sample.....	9
Data Analysis	10
Quality criteria and ethical considerations.....	10
Limitations of the qualitative research.....	10
THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the EU – facts and figures	11
The German support system for female trafficked persons at federal, state and municipal level	12
National level.....	12
Federal state level – Bavaria	13
Regional level – Augsburg & Bad Kissingen	14
Psycho-social and legal support.....	15
Identification.....	15
Immigration issues.....	17
a) Obtaining a residence permit.....	17
b) Extending the temporary residence permit.....	18
Criminal proceedings.....	19
Family-related matters	20
Accommodation.....	21
Compensation and material support	21
Access to medical health services.....	23
Access to psychological health services	24
Access to other integration measures (e.g. leisure activities)	25
Economic empowerment.....	26
Access to language and integration courses.....	27
Access to training.....	28
Access to employment	29
Access to other economic services	31
Discussion	32
Conclusion and Outlook.....	36
List of references.....	38
Annexes.....	42

Introduction

This report was written as part of the transnational COALESCE project - *Legal, psycho-social and economic empowerment for the integration of women third-country national victims of THB for sexual exploitation and abuse* (AMIF-2019-AG INTE-95813).

The COALESCE project

The COALESCE project is funded by the European Union's Asylum, Migration und Integration Fund (AMIF) and is implemented by a partnership consortium that consists of MIGS¹ (project coordinator, Cyprus), the Cyprus Refugee Council,² Caritas Cyprus³ (both in Cyprus), IROKO Onlus⁴ (Italy), the Marta Centre⁵ (Latvia), ENOMW⁶ (Belgium), the ICI⁷ (Ireland), SOLWODI Deutschland e.V.⁸ (Germany) and KSPSC⁹ (Lithuania). SOLidarität with WOMen in DIstress (SOLWODI) Deutschland e.V. is the German partner of the COALESCE project. SOLWODI is a non-governmental organisation (NGO) in Germany that is dedicated to supporting female migrants in distress, including female victims of trafficking (VoT). SOLWODI Deutschland e.V. provides its clients with holistic psycho-social support and advice, finds them safe accommodation, organises legal support and medical care for them, and supports them with the return to their home countries.

The objective of the project is to support female third-country national VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation. By providing gender-specific psycho-social, legal and economic support for female third-country national VoT, the project aims to develop synergies with regard to the facilitation of the determination of needs, help and support and to improve the transnational cooperation between front-line professionals.

There is a well-documented and acknowledged connection between the support that the victims need and their gender (EU Anti-Trafficking Directive 2011/36/EU). Female VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation often have very complex needs (Rosell et al. 2018). Therefore, the gender-specific nature of trafficking in human beings (THB), as a form of gender-based violence, is a fundamental element of the conceptualisation and the work plan of COALESCE. In responding to the priorities of the AMIF (5), the project focuses on the implications of the migration developments, within a context of protracted uncertainty and exacerbated social inequalities caused by the COVID-19 pandemic that affect the most vulnerable victims of THB, in particular migrant women and children.

Specifically, the work plan for the COALESCE project includes:

¹ <https://medinstgenderstudies.org/>

² <https://www.cyrefugeecouncil.org/>

³ <https://caritascyprus.org/>

⁴ <https://www.associazioneiroko.org/en/>

⁵ <https://marta.lv/en>

⁶ <https://www.migrantwomennetwork.org/>

⁷ <https://www.immigrantcouncil.ie/>

⁸ <https://www.solwodi.de/>

⁹ <https://www.moteriai.lt/>

- The provision of assistance guided by a **Gender-Specific Integration Model (GeSIM)** for legal and psycho-social support and economic empowerment in order to improve the integration of female VoT.
- The **development of a practical working tool kit, with the involvement of the affected women, specialist knowledge from experts and recommendations** for a sustainable, gender-specific implementation from EU directives and publications. This working tool kit is supposed to **have a positive influence on the work of service providers (including asylum authorities)**.
- The promotion of a **national and transnational exchange of knowledge** between relevant players about the benefits and the use of the GeSIM. The promotion of collaborative approaches that benefit trafficked women.
- **The improvement of the capacities of victim support organisations throughout the EU to offer gender-specific support services** (including psycho-social, legal and economic empowerment) that are tailored to the needs of female third-country national VoT and also contribute to these needs being identified at an early stage.

Last but not least, taking into consideration all available protection measures in the framework established by the Anti-Trafficking Directive 2011/36/EU, this project seeks to enhance best knowledge exchange on the integration of trafficked victims amongst the consortium, which brings together a diverse group of feminist organisations with particular expertise in supporting trafficked migrant women recovering from sexual violence and exploitation.

The Mind the Gap Report

The purpose of this report is to present a mapping and analysis of needs of the gender-specific needs of VoT and of the local support mechanisms in Germany. The analysis follows a victim-centred and gender-specific approach, in which the VoT are directly involved in the assessment of existing local support mechanisms in order to identify areas for gender-specific interventions. The following areas of intervention are taken into consideration here: 1) psycho-social and legal support and 2) economic empowerment. The needs analysis includes secondary research and interviews with women from third countries, who have become VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution. One focus is on gender-specific needs for support in terms of Art. 1 of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive. In some cases, reference is also made to the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on access to support services.

After the methodology of the data collection and evaluation is described in chapter 2, chapter 3 will provide an overview of THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation within the EU. Chapter 4 will briefly outline the support system for VoT on a national, state and local level. This will be followed, in chapters 5 and 6, by an evaluation of the results with respect to the gender-specific psycho-social and legal support and the economic empowerment for VoT. In chapter 7, there is a brief discussion of the results of the research. The most important findings and recommendations will be summarised in chapter 8.

Methodology

The COALESCE consortium has adopted a common methodology to ensure coherence of the mapping and analysis of needs across the partner countries. The results of this needs analysis are incorporated directly into the draft and the development of the GeSIM (Work Package 3 of the COALESCE project). Within the GeSIM, a handbook will be produced that contains a model for psycho-social and legal support (PLM) and a model for economic empowerment (EEM) for female VoT. Linking this needs analysis to the GeSIM guarantees the consistent incorporation of the voices and perspectives of affected female migrants into the integration measures that are developed, implemented and evaluated in the course of the COALESCE project. Interviews with female VoT and a literature analysis were used as the method for collecting research data.

Literature review

The current state of research, important concepts and gaps in the support will be described in chapters 5 and 6. The literature review is based on the questions that are presented in the introduction (see chapter 1). The subject of psycho-social and legal support will be picked up in chapter 5. The issues relating to the subject of economic empowerment will be examined in chapter 6. The objective of the literature review is to address the two issues as far as possible before the empirical evaluation and to make the reader familiar with the subject area.

The literature review primarily includes results from other EU projects of the German project partner SOLWODI Deutschland e.V., in which the voices of VoT were heard and gender-specific support services and needs were identified. Specifically, findings from the following AMIF-funded EU projects with respect to the gender-specific integration needs of the target group are consulted, supplemented and, if applicable, updated:

1. **ASSIST – Gender Specific Legal Assistance and Integration Support for Third Country National Female Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation (2019-2020)**¹⁰: The ASSIST project promoted and provided gender-specific legal and psycho-social support to third-country national women, who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation, in order to assist with their integration. In order to offer gender-specific needs-oriented support, victims were, amongst other things, involved in the creation of project flyers and trained to become mentors. In addition, best practice principles were developed with regard to gender-specific legal support and integration support (Yonkova et al. 2020: 6-8).
2. **INTAP – INTersectional APproach to the process of integration in Europe for survivors of THB from Nigeria and China, particularly women and mothers (2019-2020)**¹¹: INTAP aimed to find longer term solutions for the integration of Nigerian and Chinese survivors of trafficking (SoT). Within the project, empirical studies were undertaken with regard

¹⁰ <https://www.solwodi.de/seite/396207/eu-projekt-amif-assist.html>

¹¹ <https://intap-europe.eu/>

to the barriers to and chances of integration for Nigerian and Chinese SoT and intersectional integration approaches were proposed (Blöcher et al. 2020a, 2020b; Sander 2020a, 2020b).

3. **LIBES – “Life Beyond the Shelter” (long-term support for survivors of THB transitioning from shelter life to independence) (2019 – 2021)**¹²: The objective of the project is to support VoT from third countries with their long-term integration and to work out recommendations for action for social work. The project report – “*A World I Can Trust*” - *The needs of third-country national victims of trafficking transitioning from shelter to independent living* – is the result of a study into the needs of VoT in the transition from support in a shelter or refugee accommodation to independent living. The research aimed to gather information to provide NGOs with insight into the needs of survivors, in order to strengthen social work interventions in this delicate period through a gender- and culturally sensitive perspective (On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 3).

Guideline-based interviews

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, guideline-based interviews were conducted with the affected women in February 2021, instead of the planned focus groups.¹³ Guideline-based interviews make it possible to gain a deeper knowledge of social circumstances as, in contrast to structured interviews, this form of interview resembles everyday conversations and thus allows the interviewer to obtain more valid information (Diekmann 2017: 532). The pre-formulated questions serve as guidance or to provide structure for the interview and make it easier to compare the answers (Helfferich 2011: 105-108; 180-181). The guidelines were also adapted to the respective socio-economic and personal background of the interviewed woman and the interview questionnaire A or B was selected by the interviewer on the basis of these factors (see appendices 1 and 2) (Döring & Bortz 2016: 372).

Interview sample

The sample includes a total of six SOLWODI clients (S01-S06). Due to time constraints, a combination of face-to-face and telephone interviews was selected. The interviewed women were purposively selected on the basis of the research questions and the target group description – sampling based on predefined criteria (Przyborski & Wohlrab-Sahra 2014: 184). The individual interviews were conducted by telephone in one case and in person in five cases.

What the six interviewed women have in common is that they are all VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation and all come from African countries. Five of the interviewed women come from Nigeria. A further woman comes from the Ivory Coast (S02). The average age of the interviewed women is 31, whereby one Nigerian client is a minor, who is 17 years old S06. Amongst the six interviewed women, two have a job: S01 works as a cleaner and S05 as a kitchen assistant. S05 is currently on maternity leave due to her pregnancy. Two wom-

¹² <https://libes.org/>

¹³ At the time of the empirical survey, only max. two households were allowed to meet.

en (S01 and S03) have completed vocational training in Germany. The trained geriatric nurse S03 is currently unemployed. Five of the clients have attended school in their country of origin and/or Germany, whilst one client never attended school (S05). Four of the women are mothers (S01, S03-S05), the majority of whom have two children.

Due to the six semi-structured interviews, which were carried out by two SOLWODI counsellors in February 2021, the clients played a participatory role in this needs analysis. The objective of the interviews is to obtain qualitative information that helps to identify the areas of intervention on a local, regional and national level: psycho-social and legal support and economic empowerment. Questionnaire A consists of the key topics of identification, residence, criminal proceedings, family-related matters, accommodation, material support, medical support, psychological assistance and other integration measures, whilst Questionnaire B includes questions relating to work and employment, economic independence, professional training, technology and mentoring. On the basis of their socio-economic and personal situations, three clients answered both questionnaires (S01, S04 and S05), whilst S02 and S06 only answered Questionnaire A and S03 only answered Questionnaire B.

The majority of the interviews were conducted in English (in German in one case (S05)). The two interviews took notes of the most important statements during the interviews and quoted the clients directly in some cases.

Data Analysis

The interview notes were analysed on the basis of Mayring's method of qualitative content analysis¹⁴ (Mayring 2015).

Quality criteria and ethical considerations

In this paper, quality criteria have been taken into account in the generation of the data, the data analysis and the data evaluation. As well as complying with the quality criteria of *objectivity*, *reliability* and *internal and external validity*, this report is also defined by compliance with ethical research principles. The *principles of informed consent*¹⁵ and *non-maleficence*¹⁶ apply to the interviews with the female VoT. In addition, the personal data and information were anonymised during the evaluation (Helfferich 2011: 190-191; UNODC 2008).

Limitations of the qualitative research

This primary research shows a number of limitations of the research approach. The interviewed women come from third countries, which means that cultural and linguistic misun-

¹⁴ Mayring's (1982) systematic method consists of three steps: a summary of the key statements of the respective interviews, the explication of chapters of text that appear problematic and the use of a category system to structure the interview (Mayring 2015: 68-114; Häder 2015: 340-341).

¹⁵ I.e. the interviewed SOLWODI clients were informed about what would happen to their statements, that their participation is voluntary and consent must be provided for the interview (Helfferich 2011: 190). A corresponding declaration of consent and a corresponding data protection concept was handed out to each SOLWODI client.

¹⁶ I.e. the interviewed women must not suffer any disadvantages or dangers as a result of the interview (Helfferich 2011: 190).

derstandings cannot be completely avoided when they are interviewed by German interviewers. Both interviewers have already worked with VoT in the area of social work for several years and therefore have an accurate cultural understanding based on experience. The research team translated the material into German. As the researchers are not trained translators, translation errors cannot be completely avoided. Furthermore, a small sample (six women) was used, which means that the research results are not fully representative.

THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation in the EU – facts and figures

THB in the EU is a major problem that shows no sign of abating (European Commission 2018). THB is still a major threat in the EU and the trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation is the most widespread form of exploitation (Europol 2021). Female victims account for 77% of all victims, whilst sexual exploitation makes up 65% of all registered offences (European Commission 2018). The available statistics require particular attention to be paid to the trafficking of women on the one hand, and THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation on the other hand. THB, which is a form of violence against women (EU Anti-Trafficking Directive), is a gender-specific crime, not only because of the available statistical data, but also because of the facts that provide evidence of the serious long-term consequences for and harm to women who are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation (European Commission 2016). Their recovery process requires considerable investment and can take a long time, which is why the planning and organisation of efficient (re-)integration programmes are of the utmost importance.

According to the recommendations of the *study on the gender dimension of THB* (EC, 2016), the report *Gender-specific measures in anti-trafficking actions* (Rosell et al. 2018) and the Anti-Trafficking Directive 2011/36/EU, the support that is offered to these women must be appropriate to their gender, their age and the form of exploitation. With this in mind, the European Commission undertakes to support efforts that are aimed at comprehensive and accessible protection and promote the re-integration of VoT, whereby the specific needs of each gender must be taken into consideration (European Commission 2017). Therefore, gender-specific integration programmes in the EU constitute a clear principle for action.

The phenomenon of THB is strongly influenced by migration flows into and within the EU and is closely linked to these. In 2018, for example, Europol reported that organised criminal groups that are involved in THB frequently take advantage of existing migration routes to smuggle victims into the EU and traffic them within the EU (Europol 2018). Just like the European Commission report (European Commission 2018), the same Europol report demonstrates the connection between asylum and THB, which has also been a focus of the European Asylum Support Office (EASO) for a number of years. Frontex identifies a signifi-

cant increase in the number of Nigerian women and girls (increasingly minors) in mixed migrant flows to Italy, who are destined for exploitation within the European sex market (Frontex 2008). In a similar way, the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) reports an increase in the number of potential female victims, primarily from Nigeria, by 600% within a period of three years, whereby the proportion of these who are victims of THB is estimated at 80%. In spite of these facts and findings, the trafficking of women for the purpose of sexual exploitation has not become a priority in many EU Member States and many women have still not been identified (European Commission 2018). In spite of the inadequate efforts at identification, even during the asylum procedure, it is clear that a considerable proportion of the VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation, who are registered in the EU, are women from third countries. This leads to an additional level of complexity in the response to them – due to their immigration status, their cultural characteristics, their limited eligibility for general state-funded benefits, the lack of support networks, the increasing racism and xenophobia, etc. This makes the integration assistance challenging and, at the same time, requires a gender-specific approach, specialist knowledge about violence against women and intersectional competence.

The German support system for female trafficked persons at federal, state and municipal level

Before the literature and the interviews are analysed with respect to both subject areas, a brief overview of the general support system for VoT in Germany is provided. This overview focuses on the situation in Bavaria, as the two SOLWODI project counselling centres operate in this federal state and it is important to consider the federal state-specific as well as the local support system.

National level

Most of the identified VoT in Germany are EU citizens, especially German citizens, Bulgarians and Romanians (of whom a significant percentage are ethnic Roma and Sinti). The victims also come from other parts of the world, especially China, Nigeria and other African states (United States of America Department of State 2020: 222-223). According to the *Bundeslagebild Menschenhandel und Ausbeutung 2019* (Federal Situation Assessment on THB and Exploitation 2019), there were 287 trials relating to THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation, in which 405 female victims testified. The main countries of origin (third countries) were: Thailand (90), Nigeria (16) and China (11) (Federal Criminal Police Office (BKA) 2020: 5-12).

SOLWODI's practical experience shows that there is a great discrepancy between the *bright*¹⁷ and the *dark field*¹⁸ in this form of organised crime. Before the COVID-19 pandem-

¹⁷ The *bright field* is the official documentation of aggregated and statistically prepared crime data (Kunz & Singelstein 2016: 198-199).

ic, 2,619 women from 122 countries were seeking contact with SOLWODI for the first time (SOLWODI 2020: 12), in comparison with just 1,917 women from 100 countries in 2020. In 2020, 119 women were VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation and forced prostitution. 80 of these came from third countries, primarily from Nigeria (86), followed by Guinea (7) and Gambia (6). Another 102 women from third countries were suspected of being VoT, primarily women from Nigeria (54), Cameroon (6) and Guinea (5) (SOLWODI 2021a).

Due to its federal system, Germany does not have a national referral mechanism (NRM) for VoT. There is a federal working Group on THB – *Bund-Länder Arbeitsgruppe Menschenhandel* –, which deals with questions of cooperation, but does not act as a national referral system, even though a nationwide cooperation project has been launched in the past (Richter & Tanis 2007). In Germany, human traffickers are prosecuted and the victims are provided with protection and support by the relevant federal states (Coe 2020: 1-3).

VoT can, in the first place, contact women's counselling centres.¹⁹ In Germany, there are a number of specialised counselling centres for VoT,²⁰ which are, for example, members of the *Bundesweiter Koordinierungskreis gegen Menschenhandel e.V. (KOK)* (German Network and Coordination Office Against Trafficking in Human Beings)²¹ and/or *Gemeinsam gegen Menschenhandel (GGMH)* (Together against human trafficking organisation).²² The consulting services offered by these NGOs are free of charge and can be used anonymously. Specialised counselling centres – such as the SOLWODI counselling centres – provide psycho-social advice for VoT, including in the client's native language (KOK n.d. a; United States of America Department of State 2020: 221). These counselling centres also provide victims with support with their long-term integration needs by, for example, referring them to a language course, integrating them into a vocational course and supporting and assisting the women with their individual needs. The aim of the counselling is to develop a sustainable support network with and for the women.

Federal state level – Bavaria

There are also cooperation concepts available at the federal state level. In Bavaria, there is the *Zusammenarbeitsvereinbarung der Polizei, Staatsanwaltschaft, Fachberatungsstellen, Ausländerbehörden, Sozialbehörden und Agenturen für Arbeit zum Schutz von Opferzeuginnen und Opferzeugen in Menschenhandelsfällen* (Collaboration Agreement between the Police, the Public Prosecutor's Office, the Specialised Counselling Centres, the Immigration Authorities, the Social Security Authorities and the Employment Agencies with

¹⁸ The *dark field* includes unofficial perceptions of alleged crimes that have not been officially reported to the law enforcement authorities and are therefore not included in the crime statistics (Kunz & Singelstein 2016: 199).

¹⁹ <https://www.frauen-gegen-gewalt.de/de/frauenberatungsstellen.html>

²⁰ <https://www.kok-gegen-menschenhandel.de/fachberatungsstellensuche>

²¹ <https://www.kok-gegen-menschenhandel.de/startseite>

²² <https://www.ggmh.de/>

regard to the Protection of Victims Appearing as Witnesses in THB Cases),²³ whereby the currently existing structures are being revised or updated (Coe 2020: 4).

In Bavaria, VoT can seek help from the specialised counselling centres provided by SOLWODI,²⁴ Jadwiga,²⁵ Parakaleo,²⁶ Perlentor e.V.²⁷ and the shelters provided by SOLWODI, Perlentor e.V. and In Via (Haus Tahanan²⁸). SOLWODI is represented with five specialised counselling centres in Bavaria (Augsburg, Bad Kissingen, Munich, Passau und Regensburg).

Regional level – Augsburg & Bad Kissingen

The SOLWODI specialised counselling centres in Augsburg and Bad Kissingen are involved in the COALESCE project as project counselling centres. Both specialised counselling centres were already involved in EU projects for VoT,²⁹ which means that some cross-references to other EU projects include the experiences of the SOLWODI specialised counselling centres in Augsburg and Bad Kissingen.

SOLWODI Bad Kissingen is the only specialised counselling centre for VoT in Lower Franconia. In addition to the specialised counselling centre, SOLWODI Bad Kissingen also has a shelter. In 2019, the specialised counselling centre supported 37 initial contacts who were VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation and provided follow-up support to 28 women (predominantly from Nigeria, followed by the Ivory Coast). In 2020, the figures for the initial contacts (19, mainly from Nigeria) and follow-up support (24, mainly from Nigeria and the Ivory Coast) declined due to the COVID-19 pandemic. In Swabia, SOLWODI is the only specialised counselling centre to provide a point of contact in Augsburg. In 2019, 38 VoT (primarily from Nigeria and Gambia) sought assistance, whilst 48 women (especially from Nigeria, Macedonia and Gambia) received support from the SOLWODI specialised counselling centre in Augsburg in 2020 (SOLWODI 2020; SOLWODI 2021a).

In SOLWODI's specialised counselling centres, counselling is tailored to the individual needs of the clients. The support offered extends from psychosocial advice and support to basic legal advice, the referrals to language courses and accommodation in shelters (SOLWODI n.d.).

It often takes many years until the women are successfully integrated into society. The SOLWODI clients are usually supported until they are familiar with the contacts and can use and coordinate the services independently. No other offer of assistance provides care

²³ File number: IC5-2913.412-8.

²⁴ <https://www.solwodi.de/>

²⁵ <https://www.jadwiga-online.de/>

²⁶ <https://parakaleo.de/unsere-arbeit>

²⁷ <https://www.perlentor-ev.org/>

²⁸ <https://www.invia-muenchen.de/migration/angebote-fuer-frauen/schutzwohnung#c438>

²⁹ Both specialised counselling centres were involved in the INTAP project. The LIBES project is being implemented in Bad Kissingen. Both specialised counselling centres were not involved in the ASSIST project, which means that the findings from the ASSIST project are extended to the regional level of Bavaria in this report.

and support that is as holistic and long-term as that provided by SOLWODI. An individual support network is built up for each woman.

Psycho-social and legal support

In the COALESCE project, psycho-social and legal support is understood to mean the provision of gender-specific psycho-social and legal services that facilitate the integration of VoT. These forms of support include the experiences of women who have become VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation and cover the integration aspects from questionnaire A.

VoT often experience feelings of guilt, shame or anger with themselves or others because the latter did not help or were unable to rescue them from this situation. Therefore, it is important for them to learn to trust other people again, to build healthy relationships and to develop an individually tailored integration plan. To facilitate this process, the women need low-threshold access to psycho-social support. With this support, they learn to overcome the aforementioned feelings and to have a safe place where they can confront their traumatic experiences, in order to regain control over their lives (ILO 2020: 53; Yonkova 2020: 21-25; Aninoşanu et al. 2016: 54-55). At the same time, appropriate legal support should be provided. The right to access legal assistance (Art. 12 of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings³⁰) is of vital importance for the victims and extends from information about their rights (legal information) and advice about their rights (legal advice) to comprehensive legal advice, including representation in court (legal representation) (Art. 10-24 of the Anti-Trafficking Directive) for cases under both criminal and civil law (Ibid.: 55; Rosell et al. 2018: 43-44).

In the ASSIST project, all partners carried out a national mapping at the beginning of the project on the above-mentioned different aspects of integration for third-country national female VoT (Yonkova et al. 2020: 10-16). Therefore, the following analysis of gender-specific psycho-social and legal support for the affected women is primarily based on the findings from the ASSIST project, which are supplemented by new findings, state-specific aspects (federal state of Bavaria) and results from other projects.

Identification

VoT appear in a wide variety of contexts. It is essential that the professionals are able to identify this group of people (Yonkova et al. 2020: 10-11):

- Asylum officials at the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) are generally responsible for identifying third-country national VoT. They are provided with regular training in detecting and identifying indicators of recruitment, exploitation, coercion and indicators specific to the country of origin. The interviewed women S02 and S06 were both identified as VoT by the BAMF.

³⁰ CETS No.197

- Some employees of refugee accommodation (initial reception centres, shared accommodation, AnKER centres etc.) have received training in identifying VoT. The client S05, for example, was referred to SOLWODI by a social worker from the Red Cross.
- Social workers from specialised counselling centres.
- The police deal with the identification of VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation, for example, in the context of raids in brothels.
- The local health authorities are also in a position to identify VoT, as the women must either register with the relevant authorities or undergo a health consultation, in accordance with the German Prostitution Protection Act (ProstSchG).
- The youth welfare office may also be involved in the identification of minor VoT (Czarnecki & KOK 2018). Some of SOLWODI's shelters provide special accommodation for minor girls. Therefore, SOLWODI is in close contact with various youth welfare offices.
- In some cases, the sex buyers or acquaintances of the victim identify women who are third-country nationals and refer them to counselling centres, as in the case of S01: *"Here in Germany I speak with the family that called then SOLWODI about this is what I am passing through, that this is what I am facing. That when I met the SOLWODI [...]"* (S01).

The fear of opening up to officials is still the greatest obstacle in the identification of third-party national VoT. Asylum officials and other professionals involved in the identification of VoT should receive an increased level of and more intensive specialist training (Hoffmann 2013; Yonkova et al. 2020: 11). The KOK provides training on the subject of identification throughout Germany³¹ and has also published the policy paper – *Betroffene von Menschenhandel im Asylkontext erkennen: Problembeschreibung und Handlungsempfehlung* (Identifying VoT in an asylum context: description of the problem and recommendations for action)³² (2020) – as a handout for front-line professionals. ECPAT Deutschland e.V. provides training in the area of child trafficking for various professions³³, from which minor female victims benefit. In Bavaria, the SOLWODI specialised counselling centres also offer training for various professions. Within the framework of the EU project ACTIVATE - *enhancing the anti-Trafficking Identification, prevention And support mechanisms*³⁴ - SOLWODI, along with its project partners, provides training for employees of refugee accommodations and lawyers to promote the identification of predominantly female VoT and to draw attention to gender-specific support. The training will take place on a state level in Regensburg in Bavaria. Furthermore, the SOLWODI specialised counselling centre in Bad Kissingen is regularly invited to the BAMF training for new special interviewers for VoT, in order to present the work of the specialised counselling centres there.

³¹ <https://www.kok-gegen-menschenhandel.de/kok-informiert/schulungen/>

³² https://www.kok-gegen-menschenhandel.de/fileadmin/user_upload/KOK_PolicyPaper_2020.pdf

³³ <https://ecpat.de/fortbildungen-termine/>

³⁴ <https://www.activateproject.eu/>

The biggest challenge for asylum officials, the police, immigration authorities, youth welfare officers and specialised counsellors is that they are dependent upon the affected women revealing their experiences before they can grant them their legal entitlements, rights to victim compensation etc. Due to the understaffing of the authorities and refugee accommodations, victims are often unidentified and/or these women cannot be provided with specialised counselling. There is also a lack of foreign language services. Therefore, victims are often put in touch with employees of specialised counselling centres. The main reason for this is that VoT are more likely to open up to counsellors than, for example, to employees of reception centres, who are often seen by the victims as representatives of the government, whom they mistrust because of their experiences in the home countries or during their flight to Europe: *“First it was very difficult to me to talk to SOLWODI about all the details they asked. I felt very, very angry about all this things which happened to me... But later I really felt free from it. Somehow it is gone. That is good”* (S06).

Immigration issues

The results from the INTAP project illustrate that the residence title is recognised as a key aspect of the integration of VoT (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 64; Sander 2020a: 54-59). This is confirmed by the interviewed SOLWODI client S04: *“Hm, until I get my stay, I can't say I feel at home. I don't feel 100 % at home right now. I hope I can feel at home in future”* (S04). The following situation analysis shows how difficult it is for female VoT to achieve this step towards integration.

a) Obtaining a residence permit

Third-country national VoT have two options for obtaining a temporary residence permit in Germany: either by applying for a temporary residence permit in accordance with §25 (4a) German Residence Act (AufenthG) or by means of an application for asylum (Lindner 2014). On the basis of the practical experience of SOLWODI, it is worth emphasising that hardly any third-country national victims obtain a temporary residence permit in accordance with §25 (4a) AufenthG (Yonkova et al. 2020: 12). Many VoT refuse to make a statement to the police. The empirical research results from the INTAP project show that many women mistrust the police and fear retraumatisation (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 62). The results from the EU project CCM-GBV (*Co-creating a counselling method for refugee women who are victims of gender-based violence*) underline that obtaining a residence permit is the top priority for victims of gender-based violence such as THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation:

“Reporting gender-based violence incidents to the police is not a primary concern for the refugee women. In order to recover and gather courage to report, these women would need asylum, but in order to receive asylum, they need to tell their story of abuse. This di-lemma creates a vicious circle for many of the refugee women” (Lilja 2019: 39).

Furthermore, according to SOLWODI's past experience, THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation is not classified by the BAMF as gender-specific persecution in terms of Art. 1A(2) of the Geneva Refugee Convention (membership of a particular social group) (Calışkan 2018: 10-11). Therefore, the refugee status of VoT is not acknowledged (Art.16a Basic Law (GG); §3b (4) AsylG).

With regard to the asylum procedure, the length of the procedure is very frustrating for VoT. The asylum procedure is also not suitable to meet the needs of asylum seekers who are VoT, even if several EU directives are implemented (Yonkova et al. 2020: 12). The SOLWODI specialised counselling centres in Bavaria report that the asylum procedures mainly end in a negative ruling. In many cases, clients also have to consult lawyers in order to have a chance of being granted a residence permit. Thus, S06, who has a temporary residence permit, describes: *"In Germany it is difficult to get a proper residence permit. Now I need a lawyer to proceed the process. I have to pay for him more than 500 Euro. But I can pay monthly only 30 Euro"* (S06). The clients receive, if anything, a deportation ban; but predominantly rejections.

b) Extending the temporary residence permit

After the criminal proceedings have been completed, the temporary residence permit can be extended in accordance with § 26(1) AufenthG, if the extension is for humanitarian reasons or for reasons of public interest. A temporary residence permit can also be extended on the basis of §§23a and 25(5) AufenthG and §§25(6) AufenthG (Lindner 2014). Other options are an application for a temporary residence permit on the basis of §60(5) or §60(7)7 AufenthG. A permanent residence permit (*Niederlassungserlaubnis*) can be granted after three years only if the VoT can prove that she has a certain level of German, has found employment etc. (Yonkova et al. 2020: 12).

It is difficult for female VoT to obtain a settlement permit, as they are often refused residence in the first place and the successive extensions of the temporary residence permit prevent them from developing long-term prospects, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic:

"[...] I'm registered in Germany in April 2019. In January 2020, I was in the court and gave the interview, but I received a negative result. After that, we have made an appeal with a lawyer, but I have received another negative. The lawyer told me that we cannot make a third request, but we should ask for a "Duldung"³⁵. In March 2020, I received the Duldung and I have it until today. For the first time, the Duldung was for one month, the second time it was two months. Since then, I received a Duldung for one or two months. But since Corona, I cannot go to BAMF by myself to renew the

³⁵ If asylum is granted, third-country national VoT most probably receive a deportation ban/temporary suspension of deportation in accordance with §60(5) or §60(7) AufenthG, provided that they can provide evidence that there is a threat that they will be tortured or subjected to inhuman or degrading treatment upon their return (Yonkova et al. 2020: 12).

“Ausweis”³⁶. I have to pass by the Caritas and the Caritas will give it to BAMF. But this can take three-four weeks to get the “Ausweis” back and sometimes the “Ausweis” is already expired when you get it back. That’s why sometimes you have to use copies of the “Ausweis”. You cannot use your “Ausweis”. You have just the copies and that can be a problem, for example in the bank, they do not accept the copy, they want original. This make me upset” (S02).

Criminal proceedings

In Germany, THB (§ 232 German Criminal Code (StGB)), forced prostitution (§ 232a StGB), forced labour (§ 232b StGB) and exploitation of labour are criminal offences (§ 233 StGB). Further information about criminal prosecution in Germany can be found on the KOK website.³⁷

Many women decide against making a statement because of their fear of the human traffickers and/or out of shame, as is the case for S04: *“I couldn’t say anything about it; I was on the road, I couldn’t do. I was so scared. Scared for my life”* (S04). S06 similarly argues: *“I am ready to do it but I am also scared about talking to the police, ‘Oh my God!’ Up to now I didn’t have any contact to the police. I don’t know them”* (S06).

VoT, who decide to make a statement, can find the protracted investigations exhausting:

“[...] I make the police statement even before the interview at BAMF. The person who had trafficked me has my passport. That’s why I made a loss declaration at the police in city X.³⁸ And after my interview (at the BAMF), the man who has interviewed me said that my story is serious and that I should go to the police. Until now, I get letters from the police which saying that they are searching for the traffickers and that they make investigations, but that they haven’t find them yet. That can take a lot of time. They do not have similar cases. I received the last letter from the police five months ago [...]. And even if we cannot find the person now, they will make investigations and one day the person can make a mistake and the police can take the person. But it was very difficult for me to talk about all the things. At the first time, I just cried. If you remember all the bad things that happened to you, this is not easy, but with the time it was easier”* (S02).

Faster investigation procedures, for example by increasing the number of police and prosecutors, would be helpful for VoT. Due to the complex legal problems facing VoT, it is extremely important that they receive legal assistance, whether as witnesses in criminal proceedings, for matters connected to their temporary residence permit or for the legal enforcement of other matters (KOK n.d. b; Yonkova et al. 2020: 12-13).

³⁶ Residence card.

³⁷ <https://www.kok-gegen-menschenhandel.de/menschenhandel/rechtsgrundlagen-national/stgb>

³⁸ Place name deleted for the sake of anonymity.

Family-related matters

Family reunification for VoT prove to be extremely difficult to impossible, as they are only granted to VoT with a residence title in accordance with § 25(4a) AufenthG, which is only awarded in rare cases, and other requirements have to be fulfilled for family reunification (e.g. international protection or humanitarian reasons or political interests) (Yonkova et al. 2020: 13).

In addition to questions of immigration law, the results from other EU projects show that family-related matters, especially with regard to motherhood, play an important role in the integration of VoT and require gender-specific support. Motherhood gives VoT a form of normality and a structure to their day and helps them to rediscover a certain degree of joy of life and to regain their self-confidence: *“It’s cool. In our free time, I spend the time together with my daughter. We’ll be playing like sisters. We are playing like mum and daughter but also like sisters. We joke together”* (S01). In addition, the INTAP and LIBES project results show that being a mother requires learning how to deal with additional bureaucratic issues (e.g. registering the child, applying for child welfare benefits, etc.) as well as authorities and finding one's way in the host country's support system. In the same way, a pregnancy means that women have to familiarise themselves with the German healthcare system and communicate with medical personnel. Having children can also help the women to make contact with parents from the host community, e.g. at nursery schools, sports clubs, summer parties at schools, etc. (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 47-48; On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 21-22).

However, the lack of childcare proves to be an obstacle to integration, as it makes it impossible for the mothers to attend a language or integration course, for example. There are often also difficulties with respect to the different methods of childrearing. Attention must also be paid to the sex education of VoT, as the case study of Nigerian victims from the INTAP project shows that some of them become pregnant unintentionally (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 48). Here, sex education and intercultural work with parents are proposed as integration measures (Blöcher et al. 2020b: 35; On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 13; 24-26; Yonkova et al. 2020: 22). The results of the project can also be verified against the accounts of the mothers interviewed for this report. For example, the geriatric nurse S03 had a very long conversation with the interviewer after her interview, about the fact that she was worried about her future. She speaks German and has completed a training programme, but has three children aged between 0 and 3 and considers her integration into the labour market to be unrealistic due to the current COVID-19 regulations and their effect on childcare (for example the regular closure of day nurseries). On the basis of the results of the INTAP and LIBES projects, SOLWODI has been implementing the project *“Erziehung ohne Gewalt! - zur Stärkung von sozial benachteiligten Familien und Prävention von Gewalt und Missbrauch an Kindern von alleinerziehenden SOLWODI Klientinnen, die selbst Gewalt erfahren haben”* (Bringing up children without violence! - for the support of socially disadvantaged families and the prevention of violence to and the abuse of children

of SOLWODI clients who are single mothers and have experienced violence themselves), which focuses on intercultural work with mothers, in Bad Kissingen since January 2021. The beneficiaries of the project are, amongst others, VoT who are pregnant or mothers (SOLWODI 2021b).

Accommodation

Most third-country national VoT are accommodated in refugee accommodations. The results of the ASSIST project show that assistance with accommodation is essential, firstly to ensure that victims can escape from their exploitation, and secondly so that they can start their recovery and reflection in a safe environment that contributes to their healing (Yonkova et al. 2020: 13; 22-23).³⁹

According to the gender-specific guidelines from the ASSIST project, VoT should be housed in accommodation that is designed specifically for vulnerable women. SOLWODI Deutschland e.V. provides safe, needs-oriented accommodation in seven shelters throughout Germany. In a SOLWODI shelter, third-country national VoT find not only a safe place to live, but also long-term and holistic, needs-oriented and psychosocial support. Women are allowed to stay in these shelters for stabilisation and recovery irrespective of whether they are willing or able to make a statement (SOLWODI n.d). The funding provided by the respective federal state and the competent ministry for the SOLWODI shelters is often only sufficient for the accommodation. Nursing care, facilities and other needs of the clients must be financed via third-party funds or donations. Personnel costs are frequently only partly covered and must be supplemented by project-specific funding. Funds for material costs for the payment of lawyers or interpreters, or for transport costs often fail to cover the actual needs. For this reason, SOLWODI's social services for VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation must be equipped with resources.

In addition to shelters, female VoT are best protected in private flats, which also has a positive impact on their integration: “[...] *I feel safe. Really, really safe. I can go out at 12 o'clock midnight, 1 o'clock midnight and nothing's happening to me and I come home safely*” (S01). Searching for a flat is a challenge, as VoT are often unable to afford the rent and/or they experience discrimination (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 34-38), as, for example, one of the interviewed VoT for the LIBES needs report describes: *“I've been told they don't give houses to black people”* (On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 16). The women often need support with their search for a flat, especially in cities with an overstretched housing market (Ibid.).

Compensation and material support

Third-country national VoT who are asylum seekers receive social security benefits in accordance with the German Benefits for Asylum Seekers Act (AsylbLG). Third-country national victims with a residence title in accordance with § 25(4a) AufenthG receive social

³⁹ More detailed information about this topic can be read in the published best practice guidelines from the ASSIST project (Ibid.).

security benefits based on the Second Book of the German Social Code (SGB II) or SGB XII. Theoretically, irregular migrants can receive support in accordance with § 3(1) AsylbLG.⁴⁰ To apply for material support, the affected women often need the support of social workers, as they encounter a wide variety of obstacles to the use of services, for example, bureaucratic hurdles, administrative requirements, practical challenges and personal and individual problems such as shame or unease when seeking help, mistrust of authorities etc. (On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 7; 14): “[...] [A]uch beim Elterngeld zum Beispiel haben sie mir geholfen, weil das Schreiben kann ich nicht selber machen”⁴¹ (S05).

Both the basic benefits and the extended benefits are just a small sum of money to cover the needs of daily life. Benefits in kind with just a little ‘pocket money’ make integration difficult for VoT. It is difficult for them to purchase bus or train tickets to get to the nearest city, if they live in a rural region or to participate in cultural events. Specialised counselling centres - such as those provided by SOLWODI – must provide the women with tickets to ensure that they can at least get to the counselling centre, visit doctors or go into the city (Yonkova et al. 2020: 14). With respect to material support, there are gender-specific needs, especially relating to motherhood. Furthermore, third-country national VoT who are mothers are also entitled to receive child benefit (§ 62(2) German Income Tax Act [EstG], § 1(3) German Federal Act on Child Benefit (BKGG)). VoT, who are mothers, only receive child benefits if they have a temporary residence permit or a residence title with a work permit. Mothers who have a temporary residence permit in accordance with § 23(1), § 23a, § 24 or § 25(3–5) AufenthG must live in Germany for at least three years before they can receive child benefit (Voigt 2016; Yonkova et al. 2020: 14): “[...] Für meine Kinder habe ich keine Hilfe bekommen. Geld habe ich bekommen vom Arbeitsamt für vier Monate, als das Geld knapp war. Aber keine Beratungsstelle oder Hilfe vom Jugendamt”⁴² (S05).

In the INTAP project, a lack of social security benefits was identified as an impediment, as this could put the health of the child at risk:

“[...] Last time [...] one of my clients came and [...] she had a premature baby come one month early, and the clothes were way too big. And I saw that it can be dangerous because the baby can get wrapped in the clothes. But there was nobody telling her that this can be bad. And she had no other choice because these were the only clothes she had. So, we gave her some money and sent her to buy smaller baby clothes. And sometimes it is really simple. But it is always like: who is paying for it?” (E9) (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 47).

In many cases, specialised counselling centres such as those provided by SOLWODI draw upon the support of foundations. For example, the Missionary Congregation of the Holy

⁴⁰ More detailed information about this topic can be read in the published best practice guidelines from the ASSIST project (Yonkova et al. 2020: 14).

⁴¹ “They also helped me to get parenting benefit, because I cannot write the letter myself”.

⁴² “I have not received any help for my children. I received money from the job centre for four months when money was scarce. But no counselling centre or help from the youth welfare office”.

Ghost (*Missionarische Heilig-Geist Gemeinschaft*) has for many years provided SOLWODI clients of various specialised counselling centres with support in the form of individually tailored assistance by, for example, providing text books, winter clothing, baby care equipment, fees for the services of lawyers and interpreters, travel expenses for medical treatments and visits to the doctor or the hospital. Similarly, the Fliege Foundation (*Fliege Stiftung*) and the archdiocese of Bamberg provide financial support for the individual case for VoT at the SOLWODI specialised counselling centre in Bad Kissingen, and the Kinderlachen Foundation (*Stiftung Kinderlachen*) provides support to VoT at the specialised counselling centre in Augsburg (SOLWODI 2020; SOLWODI 2021a). Therefore, in the case of gender-specific support, it is crucial that this does not fall below a certain minimum level, in order to avoid a return to an exploitative situation, and that gender-specific needs (for example the need to purchase sanitary products, contraceptives, children's clothing etc.) are taken into consideration, as expressed by the interviewed client S04:

“Honestly, I would say it would be good, that the authorities look on the case of such women. The authorities need to support [...]. They should give support what they need, not to push them around. It is frustrating, stressing, traumatising what they do” (S04).

None of the interviewed clients have received victim compensation, so the topic is not examined in this report.⁴³

Access to medical health services

If the VoT are asylum seekers or a VoT chooses to have a reflection period, they can access medical health services in accordance with the AsylbLG.⁴⁴ The women concerned emphasise positively that medical treatment is mostly free of charge because there is no corresponding health care system in their countries of origin (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 44-45; On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 11-14; Sander 2020a: 59). In spite of this, there are gaps in the gender-specific support for VoT in the area of healthcare. The healthcare provisions in the AsylbLG make access to the German healthcare system more difficult for VoT. Many female victims have devastating health problems, especially during the three-month reflection period. Many suffer from physical ailments and mental problems, which are often the consequence of trauma. The urgently required medical treatment is often not approved, as the need is not classified as an ‘acute emergency’ (e.g. dental treatment). No funding is provided for helpful therapeutic or sanitary products (Yonkova et al. 2020: 15). Access to regular German healthcare services is difficult for VoT for cultural reasons (i.e. they are ashamed of being a victim, they do not want to talk about having “worked” as a prostitute, especially if the doctor is a man) or there are linguistic barriers impeding access

⁴³ For more information on the topic of victim compensation, visit the KOK website: <https://www.kok-gegen-menschenhandel.de/menschenhandel/entschaedigung-lohn>

⁴⁴ More detailed information about the legal entitlements to medical support can be read in the published best practice guidelines from the ASSIST project (Yonkova et al. 2020: 15).

to healthcare services, i.e. they are unable to obtain the information independently or to explain their symptoms to the doctor and/or to understand what the doctor says because of an inadequate knowledge of German (On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 15). NGOs such as SOLWODI often accompany the women to the doctor and also pay for medication (Yonkova et al. 2020: 15). SOLWODI considers the major problem in potentially treatable diseases becoming chronic because VoT do not receive the appropriate medical and also psychological health services.

This area of support requires a distinctly gender-specific approach focused on recovery from physical trauma and conditions related to sexual exploitation, including treatment for sexually transmitted diseases (STI), pelvic infections, infertility, throat infections, addictions (especially alcohol) and other specific conditions. Many of the affected women undergo their first gynaecological examination in Germany only because of a pregnancy. It is particularly important that they are also examined for STI. The affected women, especially those from West African countries such as Nigeria, are also often victims of female genital mutilation (FGM). The gynaecologists, who treat women with FGM, often do not have the necessary knowledge, although detailed gynaecological reports, doctor's certificates and declarations can be of vital importance for the asylum procedure and a possible residence permit. It is urgently necessary to raise awareness amongst the treating specialists and to include knowledge about FGM in the curriculum for medical training. The gynaecological care should be provided in a trauma-sensitive and culturally sensitive manner. Therefore, sex education is also a medical need that the counsellors should take into consideration in the course of their gender-specific support service, as the women are generally lacking knowledge about their own bodies, menstruation hygiene and methods of contraception, as well as basic knowledge about reproductive organs and STIs. In the communication with medical personnel, a sensitive gender-specific interpretation is necessary due to the personal nature and the stigmatisation of such specifically female medical problems (Ibid.: 23; Blöcher et al. 2020a: 44). These findings are also confirmed by the statements of the clients interviewed for this report.

Access to psychological health services

Many VoT are suffering from mental problems such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD). Traumas are a decisive obstacle to integration, as they lead to concentration problems due to insomnia, for example. The women are often also struggling with thoughts of suicide. Furthermore, psychiatric assessments are often required to support their asylum applications in Germany, as reasons for a deportation ban are noted in them. Gender-specific health projects should be initiated for VoT, as not only the physical, but also the mental consequences of the complex stress caused by sexual exploitation have to be treated. Repeated rape is a particular feature of THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Therefore, victims of this form of THB need gender-specific psychological support (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 45-46; Yonkova et al. 2020: 23).

Access to psychological health services is complex and is dependent on the clients' temporary residence permit and the duration of the respective permit in Germany, in a similar way to what was described in the previous chapter (BaFF n.d.). As clients are often unfamiliar with the role of psychologists, it is important to make them aware of the need for therapy and of the work of the therapists (On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 12). It is important that suitable therapists who speak the clients' native language are found so that the women perceive the therapy as something helpful and healing. The victim S02 describes it as follows: *"SOLWODI proposed me, but I do not want it. I wasn't ready. When I talk with Miriam*⁴⁵, I start to have trust in myself and I start to forget. I want to leave the things behind. Before I can't even talk about that, but now I make effort"* (S02), whilst the victim S02 remarks: *"I feel not alone anymore, my help is here, my assistance here. I was totally down and depressed; but now I am here and talking today"* (S04). However, there are only a handful of available therapists, long waiting times and difficulties associated with native-language therapy. In general, hardly any funding is provided for therapy (Yonkova et al. 2020: 16). For example, the SOLWODI project counselling centre in Bad Kissingen accompanies clients to Wildwasser e.V. in Würzburg,⁴⁶ which employs a trauma therapist. The SOLWODI specialised counselling centre in Augsburg puts clients in touch with the *Hilfsnetzwerk für besonders schutzbedürftige Flüchtlinge* (Help Network for Particularly Vulnerable Refugees - HiFF)⁴⁷ (Caritas) and offers them a mental stabilisation group in the premises of the specialised counselling centre. Both specialised counselling centres support the clients in crisis situations by using donations to pay for several hours of stabilisation therapy with therapists who are not approved by a health insurance fund.

Access to other integration measures (e.g. leisure activities)

Leisure activities should always be taken into consideration in the gender-specific support of VoT, as they give a daily structure, facilitate social interaction and provide personal pleasure (Yonkova et al. 2020: 16):

"Before the Corona-virus was there, I enjoyed going to the swimming pool regularly and with pleasure. I wanted to learn to swim. I also went to a choir, because I like to sing. But I could only take part twice, after that singing was forbidden" (S06).

VoT do not receive any financial support for integration measures such as leisure activities (On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 10). Affected women are frequently referred to voluntary recreational activities, such as sports courses. Therefore, SOLWODI implements various integration projects, in which the social integration of VoT is promoted and from which mothers and children in particular benefit. These include: *Fit für die Heimatstadt – Integration von Kindern mit Migrationshintergrund und ihren Müttern durch Ausflüge, Feste feiern, Kochen und Sport* (Fit for the hometown - integration of children

⁴⁵ Name changed.

⁴⁶ <https://wildwasserwuerzburg.beranet.info/>

⁴⁷ <https://www.caritas-augsburg.de/hilfeberatung/migrationsundfluechtlingsberatung/hiff-projekt/hiff-projekt>

with a migrant background and their mothers through excursions, celebrations, cooking and sport) (funded by the Lower Saxony Lotto-Sport Foundation); *Integration von besonders schutzbedürftigen Migrantinnen und deren Kindern durch psychosoziale Beratung und Begleitung sowie sprachliche und berufliche Qualifizierung* (Integration of particularly vulnerable migrants and their children through psychosocial advice and support and linguistic and professional training) (financed by the Rhineland-Palatinate Lotto Foundation); *Stärkung von SOLWODI Klientinnen zur besseren Integration* (Strengthening of SOLWODI clients for better integration) (financed by the Globus Foundation); *Fit für den Alltag – Alltagskompetenzen stärken* (Fit for everyday life - strengthening life skills) (funded by the VGH Foundation) etc. A social integration would hardly be possible for VoT without the financial support of foundations (SOLWODI 2020a: 32).

The results of the interviews also show that VoT are becoming isolated due to the COVID-19 pandemic. *“Manchmal bin ich so alleine. Sonst alles ist ok. Deutschland hat mein Leben gerettet”*⁴⁸ (S05). Isolation has a negative effect on their social integration:

“Because of COVID 19 the school is closed since many weeks. Staying at home it is boring. There is no chance to go out, to meet others, classmates for example, friends. When the school starts again, our class will be divided into two groups. Since months, I am not allowed to go out to meet friends in their house or to invite them to my place. I am only allowed to go out and meet them outside in the park” (S06).

Here, it is important – as soon as the coronavirus restrictions are relaxed – to support VoT with their social integration and to re-open low-threshold services. These services are often the only leisure activities in which these women (can) take part.

Economic empowerment

The International Labour Organisation (ILO) (2020) defines economic empowerment as *“providing an individual with the right skills to excel in the job market”* (Ibid.: 58). Economic empowerment can be achieved through various means, ranging from the enrolment of VoT in a vocational training programme/school and informal educational activities (literacy, foreign languages/PC skills) to the arrangement of jobs and the provision of specific activities connected to integration into the job market (writing CVs, job search, preparing for interviews) (Aninoşanu et al. 2016: 55). The core objective is to develop both the capacity for action and economic independence (Pesce et al. 2017: 12-14). In this report, economic empowerment includes the following topics: 1. Employment opportunities; 2. Education and vocational training (vocational orientation training and access to enterprise, business

⁴⁸ *“Sometimes I am so alone. Otherwise, everything is OK. Germany has saved my life”.*

plans, resources); 3. Resource mobilisation, funding programmes (start-ups, small businesses); 4. Access to technology/digital literacy and 5. Mentoring.

There are hardly any economic empowerment programmes in Germany that are aimed specifically at female VoT. Instead, they tend to be aimed at female migrants or refugees in general and focus more on “labour market integration”, including, for example, the project funded by the Federal Ministry for Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMFSFJ) *POINT - Potentital integrieren* (POINT - integrating potential),⁴⁹ the project *Berliner Beratungszentrum für Migration und Gute Arbeit* (Berlin Advisory Centre for Migration and Good Work - BEMA),⁵⁰ the programme *Faire Integration* (Fair Integration)⁵¹ etc. It should be emphasised that none of these programmes are tailored to a gender- and trauma-sensitive approach for female third-country national VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation. During the secondary research, projects were identified that demonstrate best practices and experiences with job market integration measures for VoT. One such project is the *Compass Programme*,⁵² which was launched within the EU project *German Integration Program for Survivors of Trafficking* (GIPST),⁵³ under the coordination of GGMH. The pilot project based in Berlin, Hamburg and Stuttgart focused on the integration of VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation into the labour market and established a buddy programme.

Access to language and integration courses

The primary research and finding from SOLWODI’s EU projects show that VoT consider the language of the host country to be one of the most important conditions for autonomy. They see language as an important instrument for social interaction, access to services and economic integration: “*Yeah, at least. I learned the language. I can read, write and talk in this language*” (S04). The empirical results from the INTAP and LIBES projects show how the lack of access to language and integration measures makes integration into the job market more difficult for female VoT. In this respect, the poor educational background of the women is one reason for the acquisition of the language being more difficult, especially if the women are illiterate: “*Deutschkurs⁵⁴ was helpful. First working experience in Germany, kind of tough. After A1-Kurs, I started Praktikum.⁵⁵ I didn’t understand too much from the language. But I liked it*” (S04). Pregnancy and/or motherhood, as well as severe traumatisation, also make it more difficult for the women to attend a language or integration course. In addition, the attendance of language courses is not always covered by funding:

⁴⁹ <https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/service/publikationen/point-potentiale-integrieren-141126>

⁵⁰ <https://www.bema.berlin/en/>

⁵¹ <https://www.berlin.arbeitundleben.de/migration-und-gute-arbeit/angebote-und-projekte/faire-integration-berlin/faire-integration-berlin.html>

⁵² <https://gipst.eu/was-ist-gipst/materialien/>

⁵³ <https://gipst.eu/>

⁵⁴ German language course.

⁵⁵ Internship.

“After some time, when the children are in Kindergarten, the women told me that I cannot go to Deutschkurs because I am a Nigerian and will not get Aufenthalt.⁵⁶ The lady told me to go to Diakonie for getting Deutschkurs. I have to pay the ticket, Diakonie completed my ticket. So, I did my A1 and went on with the other courses” (S04).

The class size is often too large for VoT, as they require more individualised language support. Gender-specific topics are rarely incorporated into the lessons, although female VoT need the vocabulary for their everyday lives, including to buy sanitary products, for matters relating to childcare etc. (Blöcher et al. 2020b: 29). In the case of VoT who have never learnt the Latin alphabet - such as Chinese women, for example - it is recommended that separate courses be offered for this group of victims (Sander 2020b: 18, 33). Similar insights can be obtained from the following quote:

*“[...] I start to learn German at school at the camp, but there are too many people in camp which talk French. I talk German with Miriam*⁵⁷ (from SOLWODI) and also in the streets (even if it's false). That's how I learn German” (S02).*

One client fears that the COVID-19 pandemic will prevent VoT from attending a language course and integrating themselves into the job market:

“The Corona affects especially the foreigners. I cannot go to school, cannot start to work, etc. But the Germans for example, they know the language, they have a work. The people like us have nothing. You're like in a prison. The Corona encloses to around you” (S02).

Here, it is important for the specialised counselling centres to facilitate language support measures (for example individual lessons by volunteers), so that affected women can improve their language skills even during the pandemic.

Access to training

Affected women are delighted to have the opportunity to complete internships and training programmes and to come into contact with other people: *“I did it with my heart, there were different nationalities, it was [...] good. I got it from the school from Deutschkurs; with my B1 -Kurs, the Praktikum was included” (S04).* For a vocational training programme at a company or an internship, VoT need a permit from the immigration authority, as this is regarded as a form of employment⁵⁸ (Yonkova et al. 2020: 14-15).

⁵⁶ Residence permit.

⁵⁷ Name changed.

⁵⁸ More detailed information about access to training can be read in the published best practice guidelines from the ASSIST project (Yonkova et al. 2020: 14-15).

Both specialised counsellors and the women themselves complain about their limited access to training, whilst the asylum procedure can take years. As the unrestricted access to training is prohibited, they cannot be fully integrated, learn the language and/or look for a job in order to establish prospects for themselves:

“[...] Ich spüle nur Teller [...]. Jetzt möchte ich gerne eine Ausbildung machen. Ohne Ausbildung ist es schwierig [...]. Man kann nicht einen guten Arbeitsplatz finden; nur spülen oder putzen oder so. Wenn ich eine Ausbildung habe, kann ich einen guten Platz finden und gut verdienen”⁵⁹ (S05).

In addition, the AsylbLG includes neither participation in training or other integration measures nor the financing of travel expenses and interpreters (Hoffmann 2013; Yonkova et al. 2020: 14-15). Therefore, the Randstad foundation (*Randstad Stiftung*) is funding the project *Integration durch sprachliche und berufliche Qualifikation Klientinnen* (Integration through the linguistic and vocational training of clients) at the SOLWODI specialised counselling centres in Boppard und Koblenz. Within the framework of this funding, the clients are provided with targeted advice and support, placed on various courses, internships or training programmes, and encouraged to pursue their goals (SOLWODI 2020: 33; SOLWODI 2021a).

Access to employment

The integration into the labour market is one of the main integration goals for VoT (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 56; On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 17-20). As long as women who have been VoT are in the middle of an asylum procedure, they do not have access to the job market, as they are not allowed to work:

“Germans should 'sich locker machen'.⁶⁰ They should not set up high boundaries and hindrances for people. It is too much they ask the women to do, e.g. all the papers and documents they need. For the women, it is important to learn German and to have an interest in work” (S03).

After receiving a temporary residence permit, every residence title must indicate whether employment is permitted (Voigt 2016). However, the practical implementation of these rights to access employment causes problems. The temporary residence permit is for a limited period and the precise duration of the woman’s residence in Germany is unknown, which is problematic for both employers and training institutions, as it makes workforce

⁵⁹ “[...] I am only washing plates [...]. Now I would like to do a training programme. Without training, it is difficult [...]. You can’t find a good job; just washing up or cleaning or something like that. When I have done a training programme, I can find a good job and earn good money”.

⁶⁰ Loosen up.

planning difficult (Yonkova et al. 2020: 15). The fact that VoT are frequently not allowed to work means that they are denied integration into the job market:

“First you need to have the document. My boss even asked me to bring friends to my work. They are always searching for someone. But when the people don’t have a document, they will not be employed” (S01).

The remarks of client S04 show how integration in to the job market is made difficult for mothers even if there is a job opportunity:

“I start trying to find work since 2016. While I had Aufenthaltsgestattung,⁶¹ somebody told me about employer X. I start interview with employer X. I took all the papers to Landratsamt to get the permission. I waited, I didn’t get nothing. No working permit. After some time, when the children are in Kindergarten, the women told me that I cannot go to Deutschkurs, because I am a Nigerian and will not get Aufenthalt” (S04).

If the victims are mothers, childcare must be ensured. Furthermore, the women are often traumatised or in an unstable situation, which means that it is often difficult for them to work. In addition, women often have a lack of trust in potential employers and are sometimes faced with racism if they are allowed to work. Another problem is that educational qualifications from the women’s country of origin – at least in the case of Nigerian women – are rarely recognised (Yonkova et al. 2020: 15; Blöcher et al. 2020a: 41-44):

“First it was difficult because of the language. In the time I did the training, it was not possible to enter school without certificate and document from Nigeria. I didn’t have a Hauptschulabschluss⁶² or Berufsschulabschluss.⁶³ Maybe now it is easier; but I don’t know. It was very difficult. I have no certificates from Nigeria and this made it difficult” (S03).

The COVID-19 pandemic also has a negative effect on the search for work by VoT:

“[...] I am Betreuungsassistentin and Hauswirtschafterin.⁶⁴ I went to a school to do a course to take care of old women. That is Betreuung. Then Second: I went to the second one which is called Hauswirtschaft.⁶⁵ But in this moment, I cannot find a job in this. That is why I am doing the other Reinigungskraft.⁶⁶ But I want to search again after Corona” (S01).

⁶¹ Temporary residence permit.

⁶² Secondary school diploma.

⁶³ Vocational school diploma.

⁶⁴ Care assistant and housekeeper.

⁶⁵ Housekeeping.

⁶⁶ Cleaner.

Here, it is important that specialised counselling centres support affected women with their integration into the labour market. In addition, initiatives/projects such as *Ressourcen stärken – Zukunft sichern: Erwerbsperspektiven für Mütter mit Migrationshintergrund*⁶⁷ (Strengthening Resources - Securing the Future: Employment Prospects for Mothers with a Migrant Background) could be considered, specifically for VoT (Wells 2019: 3).

Access to other economic services

The secondary research has revealed that there is hardly any information available about the national context with regard to the topics of resource mobilisation, access to technology, care services etc. Information about possibilities for financial support has been partly dealt with above. In the ASSIST project, the topic of resource mobilisation was dealt with in the context of training. Services to support training are divided into financial support during a vocational training programme or a degree course (student loan and vocational training allowance) and additional funding measures to support vocational training (e.g. assisted training or assistance during training). Access to the various support measures depends on the residence title and the length of stay in Germany, so that women may be refused integration into the training or labour market (Yonkova et al. 2020: 14-15).

The results of the interviews for this report show that only one of the women considers herself to be economically independent. It is important to emphasise that she is making a direct comparison to her situation in Nigeria, where there is no social security system: *“In Nigeria, hatte ich die Möglichkeit nicht. Ich denke, dass 1000 Euro mir hier dann reicht. Die Möglichkeit Geld zu haben, hatte ich in Nigeria nicht”*⁶⁸ (S05). The other women see it as a problem that they have to continue to draw social security benefits in spite of having a job (S01, S02, S04): *“[...] It’s hard. It’s not easy. It’s like a struggle, but we can manage. It’s better than nothing, they are doing their best. I appreciate [...]. Improve the situation means that if I have my freedom from them, I can work. This would be the way out”* (S04). Therefore, it is often not possible for clients to be independent, even though it would be their dream: *“If I would have the opportunity, I would like to rent a store and work as a hairdresser again as it is my job. But I don’t have the money”* (S01).

In the LIBES project, the problem of a lack of digital literacy is discussed not with respect to the labour market, but with respect to access to public services (On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 26). This is also confirmed by the interviewed client S03: *“[...] I know a bit how to use computer or writing emails; but not too good. I didn’t learn this in school [...]. I think I will have to learn it better. If you have children you need to know for sure”* and cli-

⁶⁷<https://www.bmfsfj.de/bmfsfj/aktuelles/alle-meldungen/-ressourcen-staerken-zukunft-sichern-16-modellprojekte-fuer-muetter-mit-migrationshintergrund-gehen-an-den-start-75058>

⁶⁸ *“In Nigeria, I did not have the opportunity. I think that 1000 euros is sufficient for me here. I did not have the opportunity to have money in Nigeria”.*

ent S05: *“Nein, ich kann nur Candy Crush spielen (lacht). Ich hatte immer Hilfe wenn es um Dinge mit Computern geht. Ich bin ohne Alphabet hier hergekommen. Ich kann nicht mit dem PC arbeiten”*⁶⁹ (S05).

In the GIPST project, a buddy programme was implemented within the framework of the Compass Programme. The participating women were accompanied through the transitional period between psycho-social support and an independent working life by a female buddy. The task of the buddy was, for example, to accompany the client to appointments and to motivate her to prepare herself for integration into the labour market (Grün et al. 2018: 5-6, 13; 310-315). A mentor programme was also launched in the ASSIST project, in which former or older SOLWODI clients, who are VoT, supported newer SOLWODI clients with their integration plans. The mentoring programme was set up with a very low threshold and focused on social integration (Yonkova et al. 2020: 25). Therefore, it is worth considering applying the ASSIST approach in a mentor programme with a focus on economic integration.

The results of the LIBES project show that it is also important to make women aware of their employment rights, as they are often lacking important information with regard to the job market (On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 18). This should also be taken into account in other gender-specific support programmes for the target group in the future. One example that is mentioned in the report on the GRETA recommendations is the *Faire Mobilität* (Fair Mobility) project,⁷⁰ which aims to inform VoT about their employment rights (Coe 2020: 7). However, these services appear to be aimed more at European VoT for the purpose of labour exploitation, as counselling services are only offered in Central and Eastern European languages in addition to English and German.

Discussion

In Germany, there are already some best practices for gender-specific integration programmes for female VoT from third countries with regard to social, legal and economic support. The victim S06 summarises this as follows:

“I got a safe place where I can live in peace. I even got a single room, only for me. I can attend school. Every week I get pocket money and monthly clothing money. I got a vaccination against Tetanus and other sicknesses” (S06).

⁶⁹ *“No, I can only play Candy Crush (laughs). I always had help when it came to computers. I was illiterate when I arrived here. I cannot use a PC”.*

⁷⁰ <https://www.faire-mobilitaet.de/>

The secondary and primary data show that there are still various obstacles to integration for female VoT in Germany. As the analysis of the literature and the data illustrates, there are various integration programmes for third-country national migrants on a national, individual federal state and on a local level, but fewer for the target group of female VoT for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The analysis of psychosocial and legal support and economic empowerment demonstrates that at a national and regional level (case study Bavaria), a variety of long-term projects and programmes should be created that support VoT and take their gender-specific and trauma-specific needs into consideration. The analysis of economic empowerment has highlighted that there is still a significant demand for research relating to access to other economic services (e.g. resource mobilisation, digital literacy etc.) and corresponding integration programmes should be launched in Germany for this particularly vulnerable target group. Integration into the job market in particular is a goal that is difficult (or impossible) to achieve (Yonkova et al. 2020: 18), whereby a broad-based support for the victims is essential:

“First of all, they don’t have access to the integration courses [...], because they don’t have papers to stay. So, they are not allowed to participate. Then you have to find a language school, which is for free and open for everybody. And then you have, most of them have kids and then you have to find out how they can get [...] babysitting for their kids” (E9) (Blöcher et al. 2020a: 41).

Female VoT do not form a homogeneous group. They have different biographies and socialisation experiences and a variety of educational and professional backgrounds and bring different interests, strengths and skills with them. It is therefore essential to deal with one's own target group in a differentiated way so that offers are not designed without the needs of the target group in mind. The affected women themselves have the best idea of what they need. It is therefore important not only to offer gender-specific support, but also to pursue a victim-centred approach (Yonkova et al. 2020: 24). That is why it was important to allow the affected women to play a participatory role through the interviews. Only with a wide and needs-oriented range of services with different approaches is it possible to achieve this goal of helping VoT to navigate their new living environment and to become self-reliant:

“If you have similar experiences, you cannot stay alone. [...] You have to look for associations which help women or person in difficult situations. The associations can go with you and help you (with translation). These women should not hide, they must talk. What happened to you yesterday, can also give you advices for the future. You can be an image for women who have similar experiences. With speaking about it, you can forget it” (S02).

This needs and situation analysis has pointed out twelve areas in which female VoT require more gender-specific support. In addition, framework conditions for the realisation of gender-specific support should also be taken into account. In particular, appropriate political and social structures should exist and be developed in order to successfully integrate the VoT into society. This means, first of all, that VoT should be identified better and earlier than previously. Specialised NGOs can contribute to this. In this respect, it is important to provide funds for specialised counselling centres and human resources in order to address the gender-specific needs of VoT. The financial support should take place over a longer term and should not be dependent on two-year project timelines, for example. The results of the INTAP and LIBES projects show that women experience a variety of forms of discrimination and that this has a negative effect on the integration process (Blöcher et al. 2020b: 86; Sander 2020b: 29-30; On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 11). In this respect, there is a great need to implement anti-racism projects in German society and to raise awareness of THB in society (Blöcher et al. 2020b: 39). Further gaps in the support system could be filled by an improved framework, for example through an unlimited access to the healthcare system in the area of mental health, the possibility of attending an integration course in spite of an unsettled residence title, an increase in the availability of childcare etc. These are summarised in Table 1 along with the gender-specific support requirements.

At this point, it is important to emphasise that the affected women should ideally always be supported by the same person (for example a specialised counsellor). The results from the INTAP project have revealed that front-line professionals – such as specialised counsellors for example – are often seen by the affected women as *Persons of Trust*⁷¹ who give “emotional stability and well-being [...] [and] can reduce the impact of fear and the associated emotional stress” (Blöcher et al. 2020b: 16). The interviewed client S01, for example, describes this as follows: “I was not easy for me to find organisation like SOLWODI. I think I have stayed more than two years before I got to know the organisation. I was really in stress until I found the organisation to help me out of the problem” (S01). Therefore, it is important to maintain this trust, by ideally ensuring that the women are consistently supported by the same specialised counsellor:

“Social workers shall guide clients on their path towards independence. They shall encourage them to make choices for themselves, cultivate emotional stability and overcome the barriers to inclusion, while enhancing safety, avoiding re-victimization, and mitigating risks of social stigmatization” (On the Road Cooperativa Sociale et al. 2020: 24).

⁷¹ You can read more detailed information about the role and the significance of *Persons of Trust* for integration in the INTAP publications (Blöcher et al. 2020b: 15-17; Sander 2020b: 31-33).

Table 1 - Gender-specific support requirements

Area	Gender-specific support requirements
1. Identification	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved identification for professionals who come into contact with VoT (police, judiciary, medical personnel, administrative staff, teachers, nursery-school teachers etc.).
2. Right of residence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recognition of THB as a gender-specific ground for asylum.
3. Criminal proceedings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of legal assistance Facilitation of faster investigations, for example by increasing the number of police and public prosecutors.
4. Family-related matters	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intercultural work with mothers Provision and financing of childcare so that mothers can pursue their own integration Sex education.
5. Accommodation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender-specific accommodation in women's shelters that specialise in VoT or in private flats.
6. Compensation & material support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Victim-centred, gender-specific, material support irrespective of residence status Improved access to child benefits irrespective of residence status.
7. Medical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision of medical support irrespective of residence status Gender-specific medical support, offering gynaecological assistance amongst other things Inclusion of FGM in medical curricula.
8. Psychological support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gender-specific, trauma-sensitive, psychological support measures accompanied by practitioners with knowledge in the field of THB and trauma Provision of native-language therapy options Provision of psychological support without restrictions arising from immigration law.
9. Access to other integration measures (e.g. leisure activities)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Facilitation of social, gender-specific integration by, for example, covering the costs for participation in mother and child sports courses, sewing courses etc.
10. Access to education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establishment of integration courses aimed specifically at women Target group-specific teaching in smaller groups Practical lessons with a focus on things that are relevant to women's everyday life such as sanitary products, childcare etc. A focus on the needs of illiterate women

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mother and child courses or the provision of guaranteed childcare.
11. Access to the labour market	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consideration for individual needs and requirements with regard to education and vocational training plans for VoT • Extension and development of a network of trustworthy employers and educational institutions • Provision of childcare.
12. Access to other economic services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support with financing the training, self-employment etc. in order to facilitate the economic independence of female VoT • Support with learning digital literacy • Implementation of mentoring programmes with volunteers and/or former VoT clients • Providing information about labour rights.
13. Gender-specific framework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory funding of gender-specific integration measures • Change in immigration law with respect to the residence title for female VoT • Gender-specific support by specialised counselling centres. These must be financed accordingly over the long-term (personnel and material costs) • Extension and funding of shelters for VoT with appropriate long-term funding • Extension and funding of nursery places in order to make childcare possible for all women • Facilitation of gender-specific interpreting • Funding and implementation of anti-racism project in the German society.

Own table

The integration of VoT is a lengthy process, during which specialised counsellors should support the women not only in the short- and medium-term, but also in the long-term (Ibid.: 3). Only long-term support makes a full integration possible: *“Deutschland ist mein Zuhause. Ich fühle mich wohl”*⁷² (S05).

Conclusion and Outlook

This report shows how the integration of female VoT in Germany can be facilitated with the help of gender-specific support measures in line with Art. 1 of the EU Anti-Trafficking Directive. SOLWODI’s EU projects have provided empirical evidence of initial gender-

⁷² *“Germany is my home. I feel comfortable”.*

specific support services and needs, which has been supplemented by the primary research for this report.

The integration of female VoT remains a challenge for Germany, as there is either a lack of gender-specific integration programmes for the particularly vulnerable target group or these are not fully funded and/or not funded for the long-term. Nevertheless, the best practices presented in this report represent basic steps for gender-specific integration support that have proven to be successful. Together with the suggestions for action, which were hitherto incomplete and should be completed for a successful integration, they provide an approach for improvements and practical starting points for optimising existing programmes and enabling affected women to heal in the host societies and to be integrated into the German society. In order to be able to launch such integration programmes, it is important that the appropriate framework conditions are created at the political level. Such steps require not only a political awareness of the needs of the vulnerable target group, but also the political obligation to implement the aforementioned steps.

The near future will show to what extent the concept for the German independent national reporting mechanism on trafficking in human beings planned for spring 2021 will take gender-specific needs, support services and best practices that have already been identified, into consideration. The same applies to the evaluation of the effects and the practical application of the revised anti-trafficking legislation, which is also planned for 2021 (final quarter) (Coe 2020: 2; 23). For the time being, the warning "Mind the Gap - Gap in the support system!" still remains with respect to the gender-specific support for female VoT at national level.

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Annexes

A) Questions identifying needs that relate to psycho-social and legal support

1. identification and recognition as a victim of trafficking

Who identified you as victim of human trafficking?

2. obtaining and/or renewal of the necessary immigration permits

Who helped you to get a residence permit?

Have you received a residence permit or are you still applying for one?

3. international protection related matters & any other immigration related matters

Was it easy to get a residence permit?

4. criminal matters

Have you made an official police statement about being a victim of human trafficking?

Why did you decide for/against filing a complaint with the police?

If you have filed a complaint with the police, how do you like the work of the police on your case?

5. What support services did you receive in Germany?

General questions:

- How did you find out about these support services?
- What did you find easy about accessing these services?
- What is difficult for you in Germany? What kind of help do you need?
- Did you solve the problem? Who helped you?
- How does COVID-19 affect your access to support services?
- Did the contact to the service help to integrate? If yes, how?

5.1 family related matters

5.2 securing access to appropriate housing

5.3 access to material assistance

5.4 access to education, training and employment opportunities

→ if necessary, answer questionnaire B) separately.

5.5 compensation

Did you receive victim compensation?

If yes, by whom?

Was it easy to get compensation?

5.6 medical assistance

5.7 psychological support

5.8 other integration initiatives (e.g. leisure activities, women groups etc.)

6. Final questions

Do you feel integrated?/At home in Germany?

Are you still in contact with support services? / Are you still dependent on support (services)? If yes, what type?

What ideas do you have to help women that have similar experiences like you feel at home in Germany? // Do you have recommendations for women that are in a similar situation that you were in?

B) Questions identifying needs that relate to economic empowerment

1. Employment

Are you employed?

What was your profession in your home country?

What is your profession in Germany?

Was your profession in your home country recognised in Germany? Why (not)?

How did you find your job?

What helped you to get a job? What services were important?

Did you face barriers find a job and get access to services?

2. Economic independence

Are you able to cover all your living expenses with your income?

Why/why not?

- If yes, what services helped you to get economically independent?
- If not, what needs to be improved?

3. Professional training (business plans, access to resources)

Did you receive professional training?

Was it easy to access this training?

OR was it difficult to enter a professional training?

4. Technology

Do you have technological skills?

Where did you gain technological skills?

Do you continue to face technological barriers?

5. Mentoring

Did you receive job mentoring?

What did you find easy to access mentoring?

Did you face barriers to access mentoring?

6. Final questions

Do you feel integrated into the German labour market?

What ideas do you have to help women that have similar experiences like you to find work in Germany? // Do you have recommendations for women that are in a similar situation that you were in to find work in Germany?



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