



D2.2 Public report from roundtables

Summary Report



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1. Introduction

Trafficking in human beings constitutes a, usually, transnational serious crime and a blatant violation of fundamental human rights. It is a modern form of slavery, affecting all genders and ages and it may take the form of sexual exploitation, forced labour, slavery, servitude and related practices, the removal of vital organs and the recruitment in criminal acts (Europol, N.D).¹

The project '**HEAL - Enhancing Recovery and Integration through networking, Employment Training and Psychological Support for Women Victims of Trafficking**' aims at facilitating the integration of third country national (TCN) women victims of trafficking (VoT) for sexual exploitation in Italy, Greece, Spain and Romania through a healing process comprising a psychological recovery and employment-related skills acquisition. More specifically, the project aims at:

- shared and improved understanding of the identified needs of TCN women VoT and improved cooperation amongst them, service providers and employers;
- designing a Recovery and Integration Programme, fostering the socio-economic integration of TCN women VoT through their enhanced psychosocial wellbeing and employment-related skills;
- the development of a database addressing to trained service providers;
- enhanced awareness amongst TCN women VoT, service providers, employers and the general public on the rights and services available for the support of victims of trafficking, as well as the methodologies and tools promoted in the context of the project.

The project's activities are mainly divided in three parts: 1) Common understanding of needs and networking; 2) Recovery and Integration programme and 3) Awareness-raising and communication.

This public report on the roundtables is part of the activities aiming at promoting a common understanding and networking among the three different target groups, namely TCN women VoT, support service providers and employers.

¹ Europol (N.D.). Trafficking in Human Beings. Retrieved from: <https://www.europol.europa.eu/crime-areas-and-trends/crime-areas/trafficking-in-human-beings>.



The local roundtables in Italy, Greece, Spain and Romania were organised following the first stage of activities, where the three target groups were involved in interviews, workshops and focus groups (each group separately) to collect first information on the needs of the women, the existing support services and the local labour market. From this information a Needs Assessment Report was drafted (available online [here](#)).

The local roundtables had the aim to bring together the various stakeholders, providing the opportunity to interact with each other and to deepen the understanding of the current situation in partner countries with respect to the local labour market, the rights of women VoT and services provided to them, good practices and challenges and possible strategies to overcome difficulties.

Originally, the local roundtables were meant to be organised as face-to-face meetings (two separate meetings) with the participation of 6 members of each HEAL committee: 2 TCN women VoT or their representatives, 2 social service providers and 2 employers. Due to the particular situation across the globe in terms of public health (Covid-19 crisis), and as a consequence of the restriction of face-to-face meetings, HEAL project partners had to re-think the way of organising the local roundtables. Firstly, it was decided to organise the roundtables as online/offline meeting. Secondly, it was decided to organise a unique roundtable and with a compressed agenda, while ensuring that all the relevant points was covered and that all the participants had space to express their opinions and experiences.

Although the priority was to involve the same actors who participated in the first phase of the project, the impact of the Covid-19 to the local market made it hard to maintain the commitment that multiple actors initially expressed towards the project. This had a particular impact on the involvement of employers who had stopped their activity.

2. Key findings from local roundtables in all partner countries

Firstly, looking at the general situation in the labour market, the Covid-19 outbreak has undoubtedly exacerbated the position of both employers and job-seekers. Even before the crisis, in Italy, Greece, Spain and Romania many people were employed with precarious contracts or even without employment contract, and the job market was especially difficult for migrants and migrant women. Specifically, the participants of the roundtables underlined that **Covid-19 emergency has further weakened the economic situation** as many businesses have been closed, vacancies are now limited, employers are hesitant to hire people due to fear of a new outbreak, and entrepreneurship is considered to be a more difficult path than before the pandemic and its related crisis. Some of the sectors that were highly affected by the aforementioned conditions are tourism and food services, especially in Italy, Greece and Spain. Besides that, a number of exploitative practices particularly affect those employees who have few qualifications to offer and at the same time urgently need to work. It was also highlighted that in Greece sometimes women VoT might earn more money when under exploitation than when they work. Therefore, as highlighted by the participants in the local roundtables across all countries, on the one hand, we must realistically view the labour market and the challenges it presents, **plan on the long term** and try to foresee when the economy is going to recover. On the other hand, we must **concentrate on sectors that are still employing** and **on the specific skills that they require**. When approaching and working with employers, participants from the local roundtables recommend a diligent selection of employers, and possibly offering relevant training, such as basic work-rights training, with the aim to minimize as much as possible illegal or exploitative situations. In Greece participants suggested **to implement positive campaigns** and **to promote success stories** of refugees and migrants who have established a career, in order to encourage employers to hire them. Also, Spanish and Romanian participants highlighted the importance of promoting personalized support to employers, considering the reality and demands of the market.

Looking at the situation of the **women survivors of trafficking**, they **appear not to be very familiar with their labour rights and labour status** in Italy, Greece and Spain. In Romania, the participants of the roundtable mentioned that even if third-country national (TCN) women VoT (victims of trafficking) know their rights, still their essential of covering basic needs often places them in a situation of vulnerability and precariousness. In Italy, participants observed that many TCN women VoT have a rather low educational level, with some of them being even illiterate.

Also, it was noted that in all partner countries women VoT who have informally acquired competences do not consider them to be relevant; however, often, these competences could be applied usefully for employment. Moreover, they often cannot prove their skills and work experience, which results in a lack of trust by potential employers. Therefore, it is recommended in all partner countries **to focus on the empowerment of the women, on their motivation and on boosting their self-confidence**. In order to support and empower them, it is important to find out together with them which competences and skills they already possess, before moving on to developing their CVs/profiles as a first step in their search of a job.

Participants of the roundtables mentioned that **there are many organisations and institutions across partner countries that already provide trainings to women VoT**. Nevertheless, participants recommended that in order to further develop skills that could contribute to smoother integration of women VoT in the labour market, **a specific skills training should be offered to women VoT**, with a particular attention to the complementary training on legal issues and language training, especially in Italy and Catalonia.

While participants in all partner countries agreed that **a number of support services for women VoT exist**, they also highlighted that a number of challenges and shortcomings are present. Out of these, it is important to mention that in Italy women VoT who leave the reception centres are often left without further support and that many of the services do not ensure a continuous support because they work on project basis. In Romania, the incapacity to offer proper social services to the victims of trafficking is part of a general problem related to an underdeveloped and underfinanced social service sector which is unfavourable to all types of marginalized or vulnerable populations and for victims of trafficking from third countries in particular. The participants agreed on the **necessity to promote more spaces of coordination and joint action** between the different existing services, **to promote the empowerment of women and the awareness of companies, social providers and the general public**. Likewise, to guarantee the rights of TCN women VoT, the coordination with the public administration must be strengthened and improved, especially in Spain, providing women VoT with the necessary tools to face many existing bureaucratic barriers.

The idea of the HEAL project to develop a **database where employers and women VoT will be matched was positively received and welcomed as a useful tool** in all partner countries. However, some concerns, such as GDPR and the protection of the women, were raised by the participants in Greece. It was also noted that relevant platforms are already available and in use by organisations and that TCN women VoT do not need an additional tool, but guidelines



on how to use existing ones. It was therefore recommended **to carefully select employers who will be included in the HEAL Database and to ensure that the women are encouraged to carefully select employers and their offers.** It was agreed by the participants across all partner countries that the matching of employment with employee should be done in a suitably personalized manner as well, with a careful consideration for particular needs and desires of each women VoT.

As confirmed by the participants of local roundtables in Italy, Greece, Spain and Romania it remains evident that the Covid-19 outbreak has further affected not only the labour market, but also the needs of the women. Practices and tools have to be adjusted to meet the specific needs of TCN women VoT, employers and support service providers. A holistic and more organised and structured approach implemented in collaboration by above mentioned three target groups is needed in order to bridge the needs and skills of the women with the current demands of the labour market.

In the following pages, we provide detailed Public reports from the roundtables held in Italy, Greece, Spain and Romania, with the aim to offer more country-specific insights and findings that may be useful to other organisations and authorities wishing to deliver employability support to women victims of trafficking in their countries.

3. Results from Italy

3.1. Methodology

Originally, the local roundtables were meant to be organised as face-to-face meetings (two separate meetings) with participation of stakeholders from the three target groups (TCN women VoT or their representatives; support service providers; employers). Due to the current particular situation in Italy in terms of public health (Covid-19 crisis), we decided to organise the roundtable as online/offline meeting. At the time of the scheduled date, it was possible to receive again a limited number of participants in our premises, however, two participants preferred participating online from home. Secondly, we decided to organise a unique roundtable, as all potential participants we contacted informed us about their limited time availability. As proposed by the WP leader KMOP in the Guidelines for Local Roundtables and discuss with all partners, we opted thus for the second option and to discuss all topics in one meeting.

CESIE invited several participants; however, two service providers, two employers and two women VoT at the end were not available at the date of the meeting at short notice. So, the Local Round-table discussion was conducted on 7th July with three participants: one representative of a support service provider (psychological service of the local public health authority), one representative of the TCN women VoT (founder of the local women's organisation for victims of trafficking, Donne di Benin City) and one employer (from IKENGA, a local migrant association).

Two participants were connected online (Gotomeeting), 1 in presence. We had some technical problems in the middle of the meeting, which we resolved in short time, however. For the rest, the discussion went well, participants exchanged their views and we received a lot of useful recommendations and insights.

In order to obtain further points of views from participants not available at the scheduled date for the local roundtable we have further asked individual feedback and managed to arrange phone interviews with two other persons, 1 support service provider from Centro PENC offering psychological support for migrants, and one woman working as cultural mediator who is very knowledgeable about women victims of trafficking and thus could further represent women's point of view. Both persons have participated as well at the European Networking Day.

3.2. Findings from the roundtable in Italy

3.2.1. Local market needs

All participants agreed that the local job market is a very difficult one; especially for women and even more so for foreign women, especially with African origin. It means that in practice there is a tendency to exploitation, i.e. women would not receive regular contracts by employers, and thus would not receive a decent payment nor would working hours' respect legal restrictions etc. Sometimes employers would conclude employment contracts, but the contracts are then carried out only in appearance, as part of the salary must be paid back every month by the women. Another example reported by one participant was the case of women who worked as cleaning women in hotels, without contract, for two to three months; at the end they were not paid at all for their work (and must now go to court to try to get justice and get paid). On the other hand, as women usually have the necessity to work and earn money to maintain their families, they would usually not have any alternative than accepting these exploitative working conditions, often because of the lack of alternatives.

The main request from the local market is for non-qualified work, and women would usually have the opportunity to be employed only in certain jobs where no specific qualification is required, such as cleaning woman (in families), as caregiver for elderly people or as babysitter. This is also the case, as many women do not have an educational background allowing them to look for better jobs; many of them are even illiterate. Because of their cultural background many women are not used to take care of themselves, to become active in the job search.

The analysis of these difficulties of the local market and of exploitative practices leads participants to the recommendation of focusing efforts as well on the training for potential employers, both on legal and contractual issues and on (inter)cultural aspects. Further, it will be important to train women, both on basic skills (literacy, Italian language) and on their motivation to become active and more self-confident, so that they are empowered for higher aspirations.

3.2.2. Soft and employment-related needs

For the women it is necessary to be empowered, by being trained also in basic life skills, as a woman representative underlined. This would be important, as they often stay in reception centres for a long time, after having arrived in Italy, and even back in their home country usually

have not made relevant working experience or even the experience of living alone, being autonomous and being responsible for everyday duties. So, even basic things have to be explained to them like how to clean the house, how to use cutlery etc. Another woman representative said that women are often afraid that they are not good enough for better jobs (outside of domestic work), and that their fear prevents them from growing. Therefore, it is very important to motivate the women and to increase their self-confidence, to support them in being aware of what they can do and in discovering what competences they actually have. Previously acquired skills and competences can often be found in informal experiences of the women, activities they have done back in their home countries in the household, from tailoring over gardening and taking care of people/children. It would also be important to have a tailor-made program for each woman according to a women's representative, because one program may not be suitable for all.

Further, according to some participants it is necessary to inform women VoT about their rights in general, and in particular the working rights, contractual rights and rights with respect to working hours. Another important topic for women that can help them with being employed is training on cultural differences, on what to expect from the Italian culture, cultural habits etc., in order to avoid possible misunderstandings.

3.2.3. Opportunities for employment

In theory there would be no hindrance for women to be employed in any job; however, in practice there are a lot of obstacles, starting from the educational level women have (including illiteracy) and for the missing opportunities for them to study and obtain higher education qualifications; one participant said that, unfortunately, often women lack motivation in obtaining higher educational qualification. Often, as said before, women need to earn money for their families. So, consequently, for women only jobs with no or low qualifications are realistically accessible.

One participant said that opportunities for employment could be created by providing opportunities of insertion through internships to get to know a work; internships that should later lead to a stable employment. Also, a starting point should be the competences women have: once they are conscious about which competences they have and how they could be applied in the job market, one could train them in other competences needed for a job. For example, a woman who likes taking care of children and who has experience in this could be

trained in cultural differences between growing children in Italy and in Africa, so that she can be more easily be employed as babysitter in a family.

3.2.4. Overcoming employers' reluctance in employing migrant women due to prejudice or administrative obstacles

In order to overcome the mentioned exploitative practices, it would be important to offer training for employers on contractual and legal issues. Also, instead of expecting cultural adaptation only from the women, it would be desirable to train employers as well on intercultural topics, in order to explain, for example, which specific working tasks a woman cannot take over, due to her cultural background.

One participant recommends to avoid talking about “victims of trafficking” when approaching potential employers, and rather speak about “vulnerable women”. Further, the competences of the women should be underlined and be in the focus, i.e. the positive things that women can bring to an employer.

3.2.5. Rights of TCN women VoT and available services at local level

There are actually a number of existing, well-functioning services at local level, in different fields, such as psychological support, peer-to-peer support, legal support. The problem of many services is that they are often offered on a project basis (not being able to offer a continuous support) and that often there is no follow-up support for women who have obtained a residence permit.

The real change for women would come, however, with employment, i.e. with a workplace with legal contract, decent payment and decent working hours. The legal situation is important for women VoT, and training for women on legal issues should be strengthened. At the moment, women often have no idea about their own legal status and their basic rights.

Examples of different men working in the support services for women are important according to one participant, as they show women that “diverse” men also exist; diverse examples from the men they have got to know before in their life, during the trafficking and sexual exploitation experience in particular.

Services would be needed for women at risk as well; these are women who have to leave reception centres, and are left without any further support. These women, according to two

participants, are at particular risk of being forced into sexual exploitation for the pure necessity of surviving somehow.

3.2.6. Good practices and challenges

“Progetto Maddalena” was mentioned as a good practice; it is a house run by the Catholic church that accommodates women victims of trafficking and accompanies them with social workers in their path to reconstruct their lives.

Another good practice mentioned was a leaflet prepared by ASP (Local Health Authority) and UNICEF for women victims of trafficking on existing services in Palermo.

One participant mentioned that his center is currently working on opening up a “safe space”, a place where women can stay during the day. They are hoping this will become a good practice, in any case it is something that does not exist so far in Palermo.

There were quite a number of challenges mentioned by participants that can be summarised as follows:

Labour market challenges – in general, the labour market in Palermo is very difficult and offers few work opportunities, already before, but even more so in the current Covid-19 crisis, where important sectors such as the tourism/restoration sectors are suffering in particular. Connected to this are challenges with the habits of many employers who do not offer stable, legal employment opportunities with regular working hours. A challenge here is as well the prevailing masculinist culture which disregards women, and even more so women with a migration background.

Regarding the women, major challenges that need to be overcome are their lack of motivation and self-confidence, as well as their lack of knowledge about their competences and strengths. Further, the fact that they usually have a rather low level of education and some of them are even illiterate makes it more difficult to support their integration into jobs that may be better paid than jobs they often do such as working in families as caregiver for elderly people or babysitters.

Finally, several challenges related to missing or insufficient services were mentioned; these range from discontinuous offers of support services (because of project work), to missing services and opportunities (such as a better, very concrete support for labour market integration).

3.2.7. Strategies to overcome the identified weaknesses

Participants mentioned a number of possible strategies to overcome the identified weaknesses. Regarding the employers, it could be a good strategy to approach them in a different way, i.e. ensuring that they are trained in legal aspects and that they offer decent work opportunities to the women. The HEAL Database should be prepared in a way that the women can select the employers, that they can use their right to select (and do not feel obliged to accept any offer, even if might not fit to them). On the other hand, this means that the participating women need to be empowered, trained in legal employment aspects and strengthened. In general, working on the motivation of women is of high importance, as many women leave literacy and other educational courses (more often than compared to male migrants attending these courses).

One participant said that a good strategy to improve services would be to cooperate with reception centres, where women initially live, in order to plan targeted activities for the women living in these centres. This would be important, as once women leave the reception centres it is a lot more difficult to reach out to them, and often women are left without further support once they leave the centres. This means that they are again at risk of being forced into (sexual) exploitation.

Another general recommendation was to strengthen those services and activities that already exist, i.e. doing simply something more than what is already done; this would already be an important step ahead.

3.3. Conclusions and recommendations

The discussions with stakeholders in Palermo about the current situation of the local labour market, the needs of TCN women VoT and the existing support services as well as about shortcomings in services, have provided a number of interesting and useful information.

Regarding the local labour market, the situation described by the participants is rather unfavourable, because of the generally precarious job market. In Palermo, many people are employed with precarious contracts or even without employment contract, and the job market is even more difficult for migrants and migrant women. The participants described a number of exploitative practices which affect particularly those employees who have few qualifications to offer and at the same time urgently need to work. Both is true for TCN women VoT. Therefore,

a conclusion is that, on the one hand, we must realistically view the labour market and the challenges it presents. On the other hand, when approaching and working with employers, a diligent selection should be made, and possibly some training offered to them, so that we can ensure that they offer regular employment opportunities to women.

Looking at the women's situation, participants told us that many TCN women VoT have a rather low educational level, with some of them being even illiterate. Also, participants observed a rather low motivational level in attending courses or even informing themselves about opportunities for training/employment. Therefore, one important recommendation is to work a lot on the encouragement of the women, on their motivation and on boosting their self-confidence. In order to support and empower them, it will be important to find out together with women which competences and skills they already possess and develop their CVs/profiles. Often, women have informally acquired competences they do not consider to be relevant; however, often, these competences could be applied usefully for employment. Based on existing skills, a training should be offered to them, in order to develop these skills. Further, language training (in Italian) would be very useful for the women. One participant also recommended a personalised training programme for each woman.

While participants agreed that a number of support services for women exist, they also insisted that a real change for women would happen with regular, decently paid employment. A number of challenges and shortcomings in the services were described by stakeholders; out of these it is important to mention that women who leave the reception centres are often left without further support and that many of the services do not ensure a continuous support because they work on project basis.

The idea of the HEAL project to develop a database where employers and women will be matched, was positively received and welcomed as a useful tool. It was recommended to carefully select employers who will be included in this Database. Regarding the women, it was recommended to ensure that they are encouraged as well to carefully select employers and their offers; to be able to do this, women should be trained in legal issues and be empowered.

All in all, the exchange with stakeholders has revealed a number of difficulties and challenges, in the local labour market, in the existing services, and as well with regards to educational background and the motivation of TCN women VoT. The discussions clearly showed a need for further interventions, and especially for support in labour market integration of TCN women VoT in Palermo. All stakeholders showed further interest in being involved in future activities of the HEAL project, and this common effort will hopefully bring about an important change in the lives

of participating women. In conclusion, one participant can be cited with the words: “What is important is to do an additional effort and boost what we already have.

4. Results from Greece

4.1. Methodology

Due to the active measures to eliminate the spreading of COVID-19 and for the safety of participants, KMOP conducted the roundtables online. In order to meet the Committee members’ needs and to accommodate their workload obligations, both roundtables were conducted on the same day – each of them lasting 1 hour and 15 minutes. Participants received the national report on the needs assessment beforehand, to be prepared for the discussions that followed.

Five participants were engaged in both sessions – two representatives of TCN women VoT, two support service providers and one employer; all were female. One representative of TCN women VoT is a social worker occupied in Melissa Network, a network for migrant and refugee women in Greece promoting empowerment, communication and active citizenship and the other one is a psychologist working in the Day Centre of A21 in Thessaloniki – A21 is an NGO working exclusively with victims of human trafficking. One of the support service providers is a psychologist working in prevention and awareness raising programmes regarding trafficking in A21 and the other one is the responsible person for Sexual and Gender-based Violence (SGBV) issues in Greece for UNHCR. Finally, the employer is an economist and she is the manager of the PRAKSIS BCC (Business Coaching Centre), of PRAKSIS NGO, assisting people, mainly TCN, to start their own businesses and become employers.

Participants were introduced to the objectives and scope of the project, focusing on the Recovery and Integration Programme that will be developed in the context of HEAL project. They were also introduced and discussed the main findings of the research, focusing on the rights of TCN women VoT and available services, good practices and existing challenges, the soft and employment-related skills needed for women’s smoother integration in the labour market, ways to overcome employers’ potential reluctance in employing migrant women and strategies to overcome the identified weaknesses. Participants engaged in dialogue and exchanged their views, opinions and ideas on ways to support TCN women VoT and overcome existing barriers, as well as good practices that could be implemented.

4.2. Findings from the roundtable in Greece

4.2.1. Local market needs

Participants from all three target groups that were involved in the research phase of the project have expressed that several sectors currently have vacancies, based on their own experience and views. These sectors were sales, tourism, cleaning and food services, administrative positions, secretarial support, construction businesses, agriculture, self-employment and accounting offices. Employers that participated in the research highlighted that the Greek and European financial crisis of the last decade had a negative impact on the labour market. Employers reported to be in need of support, especially when it comes to local stores, while people should be provided motives to start their own businesses.

The employer that participated in the roundtables also highlighted that Greece has faced a 10-year financial crisis, which was also followed by the COVID-19 crisis; this combination has led to difficulties for employers. She added that starting your own business constitutes a great risk at the moment. People invest their own money, as banks do not loan money, while subsidies have not yet been approved and taxes are really high. Furthermore, apprenticeship is not foreseen in Greece, worsening the situation. Specifically, for the tourism industry and in contrary to the views of the research participants, she mentioned that even though it is usually the sector offering the most vacancies in the Greek labour market, it is nowadays fully staffed, with very limited possibilities for employment.

4.2.2. Soft and employment-related skills needs

The skills needed for TCN women VoT's smoother integration in the labour market that emerged from the research are communication, digital, language, technological and administrative skills, as well as openness and adaptability. Women should also receive practical information on job interviews, as well as psychological support before entering the labour market and during their work. Trainings organised by experts were also recommended by research participants, as well as support in the development of their CV and making acquaintances that could potentially support them in finding a job. Research participants also reported that women need guidance on where to look for work and receive information on the necessary documents to provide. They also proposed for women to be guided by mentors and receive support and training on the national language. The understanding and support of employers was also found of vital importance. Certificates proving the knowledge and previously acquired

skills were found very important. Finally, research showed that an online platform, available in the most common languages of TCN women, would be really helpful in terms of integrating in the labour market.

With regards to skills, the employer that participated in the roundtables suggested that trainings should be individualised, whilst the women's previously acquired skills should always be taken under consideration; focus should be laid on the skills and competences each individual has potential to develop. Apart from soft skills, hard skills that are correlated to the current labour market demands should also be included in such trainings.

4.2.3. Opportunities for employment

Research evidence showed that the lack of employment constitutes one of the challenges women face in their everyday life; they find it indeed difficult to find a job, even those who have been employed upon their arrival in the country. Some of the participants in the research reported that language barriers can work as a disadvantage when looking for a job. According to research participants, potential opportunities for employment could be administrative positions, secretarial support, sales, accounting offices, tourism, cleaning, food and construction services, agriculture and self-employment.

The employer that participated in the roundtables underlined that administrative positions and secretarial support are jobs where language skills are a prerequisite. One of the support service providers asked whether employers received information regarding trafficking in human beings before participating in the research and suggesting potential sectors where TCN women VoT could be occupied. It should be noted that employers who participated in the needs assessment were mostly informed about the project and were provided a few information regarding trafficking; their answers were mostly based on their own perception and already acquired knowledge, whilst they tried to combine the local market needs (i.e. vacancies) and potential employability opportunities.

One support service provider suggested that although administrative positions and secretarial positions would be preferable, it is usually mentioned that women do not have the necessary skills. When UNHCR identifies potential vacancies, they inform the organisations they cooperate with, such as DIOTIMA, in order to pass on the information to women refugees they come in contact; nonetheless, it was pointed out that the connection with the labour market should be more concrete and organised.

In terms of future opportunities for employment, the employer underlined that the upcoming period will be difficult due to the recession and the lack of vacancies. Characteristically, she stated that 'the impact of the COVID-19 has not yet manifested on the labour market'. The industries of tourism and food services are two of the most important sectors in the Greek economy and are very affected by the sanitary situation: although many hotels, cafeterias and restaurants have reopened, they cannot proceed with hiring. Employers appear to be hesitant to hire staff because they fear a second wave of COVID-19. The employer suggested that maybe women should be guided to different sectors and the acquisition of other skills.

On the other hand, one of the representatives that participated in the roundtable mentioned that three women in their organisation have found a job during the quarantine: two were employed in the sector of food services and packaging and the other one was employed as a care-taker by an NGO in an accommodation centre for unaccompanied minors. The other representative described that five women of their organisation were supposed to be hired in a restaurant and the employer informed them that they could only hire one.

The sector of food production was mentioned to experience growth, along with the care-taking of elder people and/or children. However, people who are occupied in the latter positions are usually employed without an insurance. The employer highlighted that networking is very important when looking for a job, while women need to learn where to look.

The possibility for women to work in NGOs as interpreters or in other positions was considered risky by the Committee members, as this could potentially cause secondary victimisation; victims of trafficking could relive their own experiences and trauma when listening to other victims' narrations. The aforementioned possibility should be examined individually and only if women are in a relevant psychological state and have received training. One of the support service providers pointed out that although this would be helpful as these women could better understand the needs of the victims, some of the interpreters occupied in her organisation, that have not been victims of trafficking, find their work hard and have requested for supervision, due to the harsh experiences victims narrate every day. Apart from security reasons, the support service provider would not recommend for the women to be occupied in this field, since there is a lot of employment instability, due to the lack of funding.

One representative reported that women have not expressed specific requirements regarding employment, as they have an eminent need to earn money. Representatives emphasised the case of women whose children reside in their country of origin; they are willing to work anywhere in order to help their children. Only some women that used to be occupied in a

specific sector in their origin country have expressed the will to do something similar. Women that have sought help in the representative's organisation are already provided support, in terms of accompanying them in job interviews and developing a CV. It was mentioned that some women have expressed their disappointment when they were not called back after a number of job interviews.

One support service provider underlined that the needs of TCN women VoT should be treated holistically, as sometimes when one of them is neglected, it causes important problems to the individual; all needs (e.g. accommodation, legal and psychological assistance, employment) are equally vital and should be covered. TCN women VoT need sustainable solutions when it comes to earning an income and being empowered, so that they are not re-trafficked, as in some cases, they can earn more money when being exploited than when working "regular jobs", which makes them vulnerable to exploitation again.

4.2.4. Overcoming employers' reluctance in employing migrant women due to prejudice or administrative obstacles

One of the support service providers explained that it is very important to find employers that are interested and willing to hire TCN women. In many cases, the preparation and empowerment of women is not enough, therefore, employers should be sensitised and opened to hire them, treat them and their experiences with respect, bearing in mind that in many cases they do not have the necessary qualifications, but have potential and are willing to work.

A representative reported that women are also reluctant to trust employers, meaning that the latter should be more understanding. One support service provider elaborated that many of the women that arrive in the country rush to find a job, regardless of their financial and accommodation situation and are sometimes still upset, which is also manifested in context of how they behave in the workplace. This population is vulnerable and sensitive when it comes to language, understanding the cultural background and former experience. The other support service provider expressed that many employers have appeared to be reluctant to hire TCN women. TCN women expressed that they are not sure whether they are not hired because they do not have the necessary qualifications, or because they are women or refugees. Women have referred to discriminative behaviours, but they cannot always define the form of discrimination per se. Women seem to believe that it is a combination of the above.

The employer highlighted that what is important for employers is for the newly hired person to get along and have a similar background with the other members of the team; however, it is not clear whether this constitutes a form of discrimination.

One of the support services providers highlighted that even though large scale awareness raising campaigns are always useful and beneficial, the basis of such discrimination is usually deeply rooted stereotypes. Thus, it is not as easy to combat this phenomenon. They suggested that such campaigns should also include success stories, promoting stories of refugees that were hired and are now successful. One of the representatives suggested that we should focus on the empowerment of victims of trafficking, so that they can familiarise with these aspects of reality, in order to be able to handle such incidents and behaviours. This would be easier than sensitising all employers.

The support service provider working in A21 reported that the organisation is currently implementing awareness raising activities to inform the public regarding the phenomenon and ways to identify a victim, but have not yet introduced the topic of hiring refugees, migrants, or victims of trafficking. As she quoted: 'maybe the legislative framework should impose a specific number of foreigners that should be hired, at least in big businesses' this way employers could familiarise with a multicultural working environment. Another suggestion would be to reward and promote such initiatives, maybe in the context of Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) actions.

The employer highlighted that CSR actions that are not implemented by the social sector, are carried out only by large business, as the owners of smaller companies 'are struggling to survive' and are not focused on these issues. She confirmed that the most fruitful way to overcome such reluctance is to promote success stories of refugees that have created a career; a positive campaign would have the best impact.

In terms of others initiatives, the employer highlighted that the legal and tax framework are formed in a way that it makes it difficult for employers to hire TCN women VoT. She further mentioned a former subsidised programme to hire refugees to which employers/business owners did not want to participate, as they would face several problems in case they wanted to fire them, due to programme related constraints, and faced reactions by the preoccupied staff, as the difference in salary was important (the salary of the refugees was fixed and higher than the one of the other staff members). Furthermore, apprenticeship is only implemented by universities and cannot be organized outside of this context. The inexistence of apprenticeship was underlined as a very important deficiency.

4.2.5. Rights of TCN women VoT and available services at local level

As emerged from the research, TCN women VoT are entitled to receive support by the State and/or NGOs in terms of accommodation, psychosocial support, interpretation and employability. Women receive information regarding their rights by the police, relevant organisations, the Asylum Office and the consent forms of the National Referral Mechanism distributed to victims of trafficking and include information regarding the phenomenon and victims' rights. According to the research findings, TCN women VoT also learn about their rights through available internet platforms, such as the one of the Greek Council for Refugees (GCR). Women appeared to have basic knowledge about their rights and reported to be familiar with their rights on healthcare, employment and their children's right to go to school. In terms of organisations, women reported to be familiar with ARSIS, UNHCR, SolidarityNow, Médecins du Monde and OAED.

The employer that participated in the roundtables expressed that women are less familiar with their labour rights and the labour status in Greece, while she highlighted that each case is different, depending on the documents each woman acquired. Furthermore, she clarified that developing one's own entrepreneurship experience is more difficult than finding employment in general. She also elaborated that, in contrast to the research findings, asylum seekers are not entitled to establish their own business. One of the representatives of TCN women VoT explained that women were not only exploited by partners and traffickers during their journey, but that the 'circle of exploitation' is still ongoing once they arrive at destination. For example, they might not find it peculiar 'when someone asks them for 20 euros to prepare the necessary papers [...] needed to work in a restaurant or when someone tells them that [...] they will work and get paid in five months'. Women have an eminent need for money and they need to feel active citizens. The representative also reported that women have difficulty in understanding the interconnection between the allowances provided by the State and several aspects of everyday life. For example, they reported that women have difficulty understanding that upon their hiring, their 'unemployment card' provided by OAED is no longer active, meaning that the free use of public transportation is not applicable anymore. One of the support service providers underlined that 'the bureaucratic procedures to find a job or open one's own business is very difficult for people who have completed higher education, speak the language and have Greek nationality'. The support service provider mentioned that women are not informed about their rights. Even though the legislative framework is well structured and protects victims of trafficking, there are no integration policies, meaning that the law foresees limited protection, while tools are not provided for women to be independent. This makes them vulnerable to re-

exploitation, either by traffickers or by other people. Even if a person is fully informed about their rights, the system remains chaotic, especially when opening a business. For example, in order for a TCN women VoT to receive the Social Solidarity Income, they need to have a rent under their name for six months, which is not practically implemented; most victims are accommodated in shelters meaning that they cannot apply for this specific allowance. Thus, even if women are familiar with their rights, they face difficulties exercising them.

4.2.6. Good practices and challenges

In terms of existing challenges, the employer that participated in the roundtables highlighted that the COVID-19 crisis led to changes in the labour market: businesses closed and employers are struggling. The vacancies have been reduced, also causing difficulties for people who do not face the same challenges and are not as vulnerable as TCN women VoT. One of the representatives mentioned that some women that were hired before the quarantine were fired upon the spreading of COVID-19, while some others that were supposed to start working in May, will start working in July. In such cases, women needed further support during and after the COVID-19 crisis.

Another reported challenge was that during the lockdown, several organisations only deployed security staff, while professionals, mostly teleworking, were not able to cover the women's needs, that were different or more than the needs they had before the crisis. Professionals also had to use new methods, such as psychological online support sessions.

The support service provider working at UNCHR mentioned that the organisation is in contact with many Communities, which are established by refugees and are in contact with other newly arrived refugees and migrants. She reported that many people working in the sector of food services, without health insurance, lost their jobs with no prospect of compensation. These conditions and employment status led to several issues, as some of the women were not re-employed after the lifting of the lockdown. Women worry about the aforementioned conditions and for the possibility of a second quarantine. The employer highlighted that the difficulties women with children face are very important not only for TCN women VoT, but also for all single-parent families. Women need support by NGOs and organisations.

One of the representatives suggested that some of the TCN women VoT in their organisation were working and continued to work during the COVID-19 crisis as well. However, one woman that used to work in a cafeteria lost her job before the quarantine started. Nonetheless, professionals provided greater support to the women during the lockdown than before.

Another identified issue was that TCN women VoT could not confirm/prove previously acquired skills and/or previous work experience. On the other side, employers need to verify any existing skill and experience. An organisation validating previously acquired skills and previous work experience or providing certificates for newly developed skills and competences would be beneficial. One support service provider referred to the existence of such an organisation, from another country, managed by migrants and addressing migrants, that provided relevant certificates. A relevant mass intervention, which could support more TCN women in employment simultaneously, was reported to be more beneficial. The employer confirmed that the abovementioned idea would be very beneficial, especially the peer-to-peer training. The support service provider from the UNHCR shared that the organisation hosts the Progress platform, where all people are registered to receive financial assistance and amongst the different types of requested information, the work experience and level of education are included. In this way, if another organisation is in need of employees with a specific background, they come into contact and introduce the employers to potential employees. The employer raised questions on how UNHCR validates work experience, which was clarified as not being the case. However, people who are interested in a specific position do not start their new employment without any training.

The employer highlighted that there were cases of beneficiaries hired and were proven not to have the necessary qualifications. One of the support service providers underlined that trainings should be available upon the hiring of participants and before they start working, as some skills are easily detected, while others are not.

One of the representatives mentioned that one of the women that used to visit the Day Care Centre of their organisation has attended sewing seminars and got certified. When she moved to Germany and during her staying in the camp, women were asked whether they were able to sew. Women were hired to sew masks during the quarantine and she felt very nice as the seminars she has attended in Greece were beneficial.

4.2.7. Strategies to overcome the identified weaknesses

Some of the difficulties faced by professionals in their everyday work identified through the research was the lack of trust women show towards professionals, due to former experience and distrust towards authorities. Nonetheless, it seems to change over time, as a relationship of trust is built between the professionals and the beneficiaries. Other barriers identified through the research were the difficulty to approach women that are not accommodated in

shelters and live in the street and the language barrier, especially when services of interpretation are not provided. Another identified difficulty was the lack of information and training provided to professionals regarding the handling of cases of trafficking, especially in remote areas. Cultural elements, such as practices of religion, culture or magic (e.g. juju in Nigeria) might also be a barrier between professionals and the TCN women VoT.

Regarding the HEAL Database, participants expressed their concerns in terms of respect of the GDPR and the protection of the women that may register. The matter of confidentiality was underlined, as the employer would be aware that a woman who is a victim of trafficking will be working in their business. One of the support service providers expressed that it would not be beneficial for employers to have a pool of candidates with this specific identity. The employer specified that employers would hire a TCN woman VoT for two reasons: either to do good or for this to be considered a CSR action. By doing good, we refer to their willingness to hire a TCN woman VoT over someone else with the same qualifications. Cultural aspects, such as the language, were also considered very important for their hiring, not only for third country nationals, but also for Europeans. A participant proposed to develop a platform, available in most common languages, including training tools and vacancies whereas the other actors found the already existing platforms sufficient. According to their advice, what the women need is to receive practical information on how to use such platforms, rather than the creation of a new tool. The idea of creating a platform where women would only have access to information regarding vacancies was found unnecessary, as existing platforms already cover this field and are used by organisations. It was mentioned that the HEAL platform, when created, should be managed by an organisation that would also provide support in women's preparation to their integration in the labour market. Otherwise, the platform would have limited vacancies, compared to other platforms that are already in use. One of the representatives reported that the women she represented did not express such specific needs in terms of employment.

One of the support service providers suggested that many women apply for jobs with the support of professionals. The other support service provider added that organisations that are already in contact with TCN women VoT should provide support/assistance in the development of necessary skills to integrate in the labour market.

4.3. Conclusions and recommendations

Employers in Greece seem to currently face several difficulties, due to the 10-year financial crisis, which was followed by the COVID-19 outbreak. Businesses have closed, vacancies are

limited, employers are hesitant to hire people due to fear of a new outbreak, and entrepreneurship is considered to be more difficult than finding a job in general. Some of the sectors that were highly affected by the aforementioned conditions were tourism and food services. It was underlined that some TCN women VoT that were fired before the quarantine, were not re-employed upon the lifting of the lockdown. Hard skills were reported to be equally important to soft skills, while they should be correlated to the current needs/demands of the local market.

Food production and care-taking of elder people and children were reported to experience growth. Nonetheless, people who are occupied in these positions are usually employed without a contract or insurance. One of the representatives mentioned that some of the women she represented were employed in the sectors of food services and food packaging during the quarantine, while one was employed in an accommodation centre for unaccompanied minors as a care-taker. The idea of women working in NGOs and organisations as interpreters or cultural mediators was not welcomed by the Committee members, as this could cause secondary victimisation, whilst such positions are interconnected to funding and are usually offered for limited time.

It was expressed that women's needs should be treated holistically. When one of their needs is neglected, it can cause difficulties in their integration and everyday life. It was highlighted that sometimes women might earn more money when under exploitation than when they work. Thus, women's income should be sufficient and they should be empowered in order to be independent and prevent re-trafficking. Participants suggested that a mass intervention that would provide employment to more women simultaneously would be more beneficial, while peer-to-peer training was also proposed.

Employers who are willing and interested in hiring TCN women VoT should be approached and sensitized. Some of the Committee members suggested to implement positive campaigns and to promote success stories of refugees and migrants that have established a career in order to encourage employers to hire them. The rewarding and promotion of such initiatives was also proposed. Furthermore, apprenticeship should not only be implemented in context of universities, but to be established as a practice. On the other hand, women should learn how to apply for a job and be empowered in handling rejection and discriminative behaviours.

Organisations already provide trainings to TCN women VoT, in order to develop skills that could contribute to their smoother integration in the labour market. However, women cannot prove their skills and work experience, which leads to the lack of trust shown by potential employers.

An organisation validating previously acquired skills and competences was found ideal. It was also proposed that an organisation could be focused on training and providing relevant certificates.

In terms of their rights, women appear not to be familiar with their labour rights and labour status in the country, even though research showed that they have basic knowledge on their overall rights and the support they are entitled to in Greece. With regards to their needs, support service providers had to address different needs expressed by the women during the quarantine, while they had to use new methods, such as online instead of face-to-face psychological sessions.

Amongst the identified good practices, one of the support service providers mentioned that they cooperate with other organisations, so that when they are informed of vacancies, they bring into contact employers with potential employees. Similarly, they have also established communication with refugee/migrant communities that also welcome newly arrived refugees and migrants. Another good practice proposed was about an organisation managed by migrants and addressing migrants, which also provides certificates for previously acquired skills. In addition, A21 is currently implementing awareness raising campaigns to inform the public regarding trafficking in human beings and ways to identify a victim.

With regards to the development of a database to link vacancies with women's CVs, the HEAL Committee members raised concerns on the risks such an initiative might entail. They stated that the focus should be laid on GDPR and the protection of women. Furthermore, relevant platforms are already available and in use by organisations. It was clarified that TCN women VoT do not need an additional tool, but guidelines on how to use existing ones.

It remains evident that the COVID-19 outbreak has highly affected not only the labour market, but also the needs of the women. Practices and tools have to be adjusted to meet the needs of TCN women VoT, employers and support service providers. A holistic and more organised and structured approach is needed, in order to bridge the needs and skills of the women with the current demands of the labour market.

5. Results from Spain

5.1. Methodology

The original purpose of the project was to carry out both roundtables in face-to-face sessions with the participation of the 6 members of each HEAL committee: 2 TCN women VoT, 2 social service providers and 2 employers. Due to the health emergency, and as a consequence of the restriction of face-to-face meetings, both local roundtables were implemented at the same day, in an online format (Google Meet) and with a compressed agenda, while ensuring that all the relevant points was covered and that all the participants had space to express their opinions and experiences.

Although the priority was to involve the same actors who participated in the first phase of the project, the impact of the Covid-19 to the local market made it hard to maintain the commitment that multiple actors initially expressed towards the project. This had a particular impact on the involvement of employers who had stopped their activity.

Finally, 4 representatives became part of the roundtables: 1 representative of women, who presented the results of the focus group developed with 6 TCN women VoT. She is also a social worker with huge experience supporting women survivors of human trafficking; 2 social providers: one social worker with experience in promoting processes of labour inclusion with TCN women VoT and one labour intermediary and prospector; 1 employer from a company focused on recruitment and human resources. This company offers comprehensive Human Resources Solutions such as Temporary Work, Outsourcing Services, Selection Processes and Employee Training.

All the participants were women, with extensive experience supporting women victims of human trafficking, but also victims of gender-based violence and other form of violence.

The two roundtables lasted two hours, following this agenda:

General

(10') Brief presentation of the project HEAL, aims and topics of discussions and ground rules.

(10') Brief presentation of the participants (name and their contribution to the conversation).

1st Part

(15') Presentation of the results of the needs assessment and reflection/comments of the participants

(40') Discussion with the participants on:

- Women VoT needs and weaknesses to promote labour inclusion: What are the current local market needs and their impacts on TCN women VoT's processes of recovery and autonomy? What strategies contribute or can contribute to overcoming weaknesses? What is the impact caused by the Covid-19?
- Soft and employment-related needs: what skills are important for the smoother integration of women VoT in the labour market? How can they be cultivated?
- Opportunities for employment: What are the potentials in-demand occupations? Which are the main characteristics and labour conditions?
- Overcoming employers' reluctance in employing migrant women due to prejudice or administrative obstacles.

2nd part

(25') Presentation and discussion of the rights of TCN women VoT and available services at the local level: good practices, challenges and ways to overcome existing weaknesses.

(10') Additional comments and invitation to continue being part of the HEAL committee.

The agenda and the national report on needs assessment were sent to all the participants one week before the Roundtable was implemented, to guarantee that all the participants had time enough to prepare the discussion.

5.2. Findings from the roundtable in Spain

The main results of the roundtable are presented below, differentiating between the first and second part of the session (which, as it is explained above, were originally planned to be held separately).

Generally, communication among the participants was fluent. One first-round of presentations was made to know the professional career of each of the participants, as well as their expectations regarding the session.

Although basic rules were explained to ensure the contribution of all participants (mute microphones when not speaking, keep cameras on when making contributions, ask for turns to speak and do not interrupt others), it was not necessary to recall these rules during the session. All the participants respected the speaking turns, providing relevant information in each of the discussion areas and without generating unequal dynamics or hostile environments that could negatively affect their participation.

The only element that made difficult the progress of the roundtable was the use of new technologies. Although everyone was asked to try out the tool before the session, there were some issues with the sound and the visualization of the materials of some participants. To deal with these challenges, participants were advised on the proper use of the platform and all the session materials were provided beforehand via email.

Some extra activities planned, such as icebreakers to facilitate interaction and participation, were eliminated since a very fluid dialogue environment had been generated among the participants. The use of new tools and platforms were considered unnecessary for the results of the roundtable.

At the end of the session, all the participants expressed their gratitude to the facilitators and the project. They considered that their participation was positive to their work, although they recommended, for future sessions, shorter spaces with more specific's topics of discussion.

5.2.1. Local market needs

During the fieldwork, the employers interviewed stated that the current market mainly demands low-skilled professional profiles to cover mostly temporary and part-time vacancies, whose working conditions are usually more precarious and require high flexibility and adaptability.

Given these results, all the participants in the table expressed that they agree with the outcomes. The women's representative shared that, on many occasions, women VoT usually have contracts lasting from 1 to 3 months which, although this may eventually be longer, makes it difficult for them to plan their future and generates a feeling of insecurity and less ability to

defend their labour rights. In this sense, social providers also affirmed that immediate and urgent care contributes to facilitating the normalization of this reality, making it very difficult to combine the survival and subsistence needs of TCN women VoT with the improvement of working conditions.

Despite the demand for low qualifications, companies often prefer to hire people with a high capacity for adaptation and versatility. The women's representative explained that survivors have usually to respond to tasks simultaneously, although this does not guarantee the recognition of their professional skills. Social providers and survivors stated that these market needs, especially concerning temporality and part-time work, generates high instability, as it affects both: the health of workers (poor sleep hygiene, higher stress, difficulty to establish a work-life balance) and the processes of recovery and autonomy (impossibility of having face-to-face assistance or continue with training to enhance their employability).

About the primary skills needed to obtain a job, companies consider indispensable to have computer skills and knowledge of Catalan. Both abilities are difficult to acquire for many women survivors of trafficking, who cannot support training costs, despite the free resources available.

5.2.2. Soft and employment-related needs

As mentioned above, the research carried out within the framework of this project showed that the basic competences most in-demand by employers are computer and language skills, specifically knowledge of Catalan. Despite this, those transversal competences that can produce an improvement in the quality of work results are also valued, such as teamwork, initiative, responsibility, empathy, ability to resolve conflicts, creativity, communication, leadership and organizational skills. Furthermore, each job may require some specific technical competences, subject to the particular position or job.

According to the participants of the roundtable, there is an increasing number of job offers that recognize the importance of transversal competences, although remaining difficulties in giving the same value to transversal skills as to technical and basic ones. This changing trend could benefit survivors of trafficking and, in particular, those women with lower educational/professional background, as it would generate new job opportunities; beyond the provision of certificates or homologation of studies, which is generally another challenge they face.

Another challenge mentioned by social providers and employers is the common underestimation that many TCN women VoT have of their skills, being necessary to promote processes of identification and development of competences, to improve their socio-labour insertion. Fear and emotional consequences of trauma could also interfere in their labour insertion processes. That is why the three actors stressed the need to promote long recovery processes, giving individualized support and respecting times of each survivor. If basic needs are not covered, it will be difficult for the women to continue with their training, recovery processes and psychosocial well-being, perpetuating a circle in which the promotion and improvement of job inclusion would be almost impossible.

As far as employers are concerned, even today, there are discriminatory practices that devalue the experiences and skills of migrant women, as a consequence of the mistrust of the education systems of non-EU countries, such as Venezuela or Nigeria.

5.2.3. Opportunities for employment

Both in the fieldwork and the roundtable, the shared results indicate that the sectors with the most job offers in Catalonia are the secondary and tertiary sectors.

Nevertheless, given the segregated structure of the labour market, most feminized sectors might be more accessible for women survivors of trafficking, such as cleaning and maintenance, administration, service sectors and restaurants. These are often characterized as precarious and unstable jobs, making the process of recovery and integration slow and difficult. Social providers also mentioned that these occupations tend to have a strong presence in the informal market, an aspect that affects above all those survivors whose administrative situation is irregular.

To avoid the perpetuation of poverty, social providers explain the growth strategy of promoting processes of intermediation and prospecting with other professional sectors in which the working conditions are better. It requires extensive knowledge of the structure and function of the labour market, being helpful to have contacts with other entities specialized in intermediation, in the same way as with local employers.

Due to the impact of the health emergency, employers from touristic, hotels and restaurants sectors have reduced their capacity to hire, which directly affects to TCN women VoT. During the crisis, both employers and employees faced the uncertainty of not knowing what would happen to their companies/jobs, generating higher precariousness and difficulty to guarantee

women survivor's labour rights. Also, the social distance made it difficult for many selection processes to be carried out properly, given that many women VoT did not have the IT resources or digital skills to be part of it. This situation generates a growing economic risk and insecurity about the future, despite the resources from the government to affected workers. It is important to note that many of the TCN women VoT who became part of the discussion group were not employed or had temporary contracts, making the impact of the COVID more significant for VoT. This situation has generated frustration, insecurity and anxiety among survivors of trafficking.

Despite the impact that the Covid-19 had on the labour market, employers and social providers considered that some sectors begin to have some job opportunities, such as food shops. Other sectors had redesigned their production, increasing, for example, online sales strategies. This is why it is necessary to strengthen women's VoT computer skills.

5.2.4. Overcoming employers' reluctance in employing migrant women due to prejudice or administrative obstacles

There are many barriers that survivors of trafficking face in accessing the labour market. Among the contributions of the participants, the following situations stands out: the characteristics of the jobs and the demands of the labour market (that usually make it difficult for women VoT to be autonomous and economically independent); the violation of their labour rights and the lack of spaces to denounce them; the lack of recognition of their professional trajectories and the bureaucratic and administrative boundaries that aggravate their situation of vulnerability.

To be able to deal with these situations, two specific aspects were discussed by the participants, during the roundtable. On one hand, the need to promote the recognition of women's VoT experiences, by raising awareness among businesses and by committing to a model of attention based on the identification and development of competences. And, on the other hand, the promotion of the women's labour rights, by raising awareness and providing them with tools to know and defend their labour rights, in the way they consider it necessary.

About the recognition of their personal and professional experiences and competences, social providers considered necessary the role of social organizations to raise awareness among employers and to support women VoT in the self-identification and development of competences. In this sense, the employer also insisted on the need to create collective

strategies with social providers and survivors, to improve women's VoT labour inclusion. Besides, the women's representative shared TCN women VoT demand to have more opportunities for insertion in more safe sectors, with better working conditions. One suggested strategy to achieve it is to participate in some training or internships, with the option to be hired by the company, to show their skills and have their background more recognized.

Finally, the women representatives shared that, for TCN women VoT, one of the most valued points is having spaces for awareness-raising and discussion with social providers, who are experts in labour matters, together with TCN women VoT who have lived similar experiences and are in more advanced insertion processes. Extending these spaces would allow survivors to learn about their labour rights and the labour market structure but also to exchange experiences and to develop tools to identify and deal with situations of discrimination and inequality.

5.2.5. Rights of TCN women VoT and available services at local level

Both in the results report and during the roundtable, the existence of specialized services that provide legal advice and assistance for survivors of trafficking, was mentioned as fundamental to promote both awareness and the defence of the women's rights. In this regard, social services stated that their services usually include a legal advisor who is responsible for managing all the legal aspects. Also, they offer awareness-raising sessions with legal and juridical experts who contribute to improving the knowledge of the women's rights.

Knowing about municipal resources and services is also considered helpful in promoting the rights of TCN women VoT. One example is the Service for Assistance to Immigrants, Migrants and Refugees (SAIER), which offers information and advice on immigration, asylum, emigration and voluntary return for people living in Barcelona. Another resource that provides information and advice about labour rights to migrants is the Information Centre for Foreign Workers, although there is no specific unit for TCN women VoT. The specific municipal service for victims of trafficking is the Human Trafficking Unit (UTEH).

Despite the importance of awareness-raising, TCN women VoT participants in the discussion group also considered important to promote sessions in a group with other women survivors of trafficking, with whom they can exchange experiences and strategies for dealing with situations of rights violations, discrimination or inequality.

Concerning the tasks of social providers in the defense of labour rights, during the roundtable, participants discussed the extent to which social services have to select job offers, excluding or not those that do not ensure a minimum of decent labour criteria.

On one side, survivors of trafficking believed that social providers should have a more proactive role in denouncing and defending labour rights, as they are the ones who know better the reality of the local market. However, on the other side, companies and social providers considered that, while it is important to have an ethic code in prospecting and intermediation with companies, it should be the woman who decide whether they want to accept a job vacancy or reject it, when having the information needed to understand all the risks and benefits.

Closely related to that, TCN women VoT also requested for more comprehensive follow-up in the process of labour insertion, once they have already obtained a job. They expressed that often they are afraid of expressing situations of inequality, because of the fear of losing their jobs, so having a safe space to share their experiences and exchanging strategies for facing them would give them greater security and stability. All the participants agreed, considering that labour insertion is a process that does not end with getting a job.

5.2.6. Good practices and challenges

At the level of good practices, social providers mentioned the importance of promoting processes of comprehensive and multidisciplinary support, working in network with other services specialized in the assistance of TCN women VoT; as is the example of the work done between the Surt Foundation and Adoratrius Sicar.cat². Companies also agreed on the value they attach to working with organizations from the third sector since it allows them to generate common strategies that take into account both needs of women's VoT and labour market's demands.

Along these lines, social providers also highlighted the importance of therapeutic work. As an example, they explained the experience of art therapy carried out by the Surt Foundation, which allows professionals to work on the trauma and the emotional consequences in women

² *In the field of support for victims of trafficking, Surt carries out an ongoing programme of support and empowerment for survivors of trafficking for sexual exploitation, in cooperation with the NGO Sicar.cat. The program provides comprehensive assistance (social, psychological, legal and housing) and Surt's role is to provide professional advice to survivors, to define their professional interests and to carry out an action plan for their labour integration.*

survivors of trafficking, being a key element to improving their processes of recovery and autonomy.

Concerning challenges, the difficulties of providing long-term support are also mentioned by the participants, who consider that the needs of subsistence of women VoT interfere on continue promoting themselves and improving their professional profiles, beyond their short-term insertion in the labour market.

As noted above, administrative barriers and the segregated characteristics of the labour market also present a challenge in promoting the autonomy and independence of the TCN women VoT.

5.2.7. Strategies to overcome the identified weaknesses

To overcome the challenges presented in this report, some strategies proposed during the roundtable are:

- Promote long-term processes of recovery and labour insertion, provided with resources that guarantee the coverage of basic needs. That is the only way to work on other elements of labour improvement and promotion that are not only focused on immediacy and attention to urgency.
- Offer support and follow up the job-placement processes beyond getting a job, to detect, collect and deal with possible experiences of discrimination and labour inequality. Collecting this information could have double benefits, as it would allow helping other TCN women VoT who are in similar processes, as well as the social providers that could make awareness and incidence with the companies.
- Improve coordination among the principal agents involved in this table, but also with public administrations and other local and national authorities that can contribute to establishing joint strategies for the eradication of labour inequalities and discrimination.

5.3. Conclusions and recommendations

This report has collected information on the needs of TCN women VoT about the labour market and their access to services and rights, according to their perceptions, but also with input from social providers and human resources staff. Both roundtables, held in the same space, made it possible to discuss the results of the needs report, but also to provide information on the needs and demands of the labour market, the potential sectors of occupation, the strategies to

overcome the existing prejudices and obstacles from employers, good practices and challenges for the promotion of the women's rights and their access to the available services and new strategies to overcome with the existing barriers.

This table provided a safe and productive space between different stakeholders to share and exchange experiences, challenges and new strategies to improve and promote social and labour insertion of TCN women VoT.

As results of the roundtable, it is necessary to highlight the challenges and difficulties identified by the different participants, to promote labour inclusion of TCN women VoT. At a competence level, all participants mentioned the importance for TCN women VoT of having computer and language skills, especially Catalan. Despite the importance of these basic skills, it is often difficult for TCN women VoT to acquire them, due to the lack of resources and time available.

On a personal level, survivors and social providers also mentioned the existence of negative feelings such as fear and frustration, that interfere in their labour inclusion processes. It is aggravated by the belief that they do not have the required skills to find a job or that their professional background will not be recognised by companies. Social providers and employers also agree on the fact that, on many occasions, employers have resistances to recognise the educational and professionals background of migrant women, especially among Latin American women. In this sense, the characteristics of the labour market and the situations of discrimination and inequality that women VoT have to deal with, make it difficult not only their access to the formal labour market but also their promotion and improvement.

Some strategies that could overcome the challenges presented in this report are: to value the importance of generating spaces for dialogue, where women who have been victims of trafficking and sexual exploitation can talk and constructively share their experiences; and also to follow up with TCN women VoT so that if they face situations of discrimination, abuse or violence, they can identify them, share them with professionals and work on them.

On the other hand, concerning rights and access to services, during the roundtable, it was identified that, although TCN women VoT have support and, in general, know their rights, their need of covering essential needs often places them in a situation of vulnerability and precariousness. That is why all the participants agreed on the necessity to promote more numerous spaces of coordination and joint action between the different existing services, to promote the empowerment of women VoT and the awareness of companies, social providers and the general public. Likewise, to guarantee the rights of TCN women VoT, the coordination



with the public administration must be strengthened and improved, providing women VoT with the necessary tools to face the many existing bureaucratic barriers.

Finally, taking into account the important impact that the health emergency has generated in the local economy and, specifically, in the labour insertion of people in a situation of vulnerability, during the roundtable, participants highlighted the importance of promoting individualized accompaniment, located in the reality and demands of the market but also provided with the resources needed to guarantee that TCN women VoT can participate on, such as: promoting their access to computer equipment, enhancing digital skills and finding new ways to participate in more protected labour sectors.

In conclusion, this roundtable has shown the importance of improving joint strategies and coordination between the different stakeholders involved and of promoting accompaniment to labour inclusion, based on an empowerment and rights perspective.

6. Results from Romania

6.4. Methodology

According to the original plan two face-to-face round-table discussions were supposed to be organized with a total of six participants (2 representatives of each target group). A few special conditions have contributed to the sessions being held online with a varying number of participants, as follows:

- Due to the fact that most support service providers in Romania provide services for victims of trafficking that are Romanian nationals and services for TCN are relatively underdeveloped, we have had difficulties in identifying TCN victims of sex trafficking (for more information on this aspect please consult the National Needs Assessment Report for Romania <https://healproject.eu/en/about/>). Therefore, we have engaged representatives of TCN VoTs both in the needs assessment phase, as well as in the round-table discussions. In practice in the round-table discussions two professionals working with refugees, migrants and asylum-seekers gave voice to the needs of victims of trafficking from third countries.
- The COVID-19 pandemic has had a tremendous effect on the local situation in general, impacting in particular the levels of interest and engagement that participants to the interviews and the focus groups have previously expressed. Consequently, we had a quite low response rate to our invitations from local service providers but, most importantly, from the representatives of employers as they have been affected the hardest by the economic recession. Eventually, the employers were represented by one person who used to work in HR and PR in a corporation in the HORECA sector who was very active and well-informed and succeeded to make up in diligence for the lack of another representative.
- The two sessions of round-table discussions took place online over the Zoom Meeting platform, not only because of the limited availability of the participants but also because one of the experts, a representative of the TCN VoT, is a resident of Timisoara, another city in Romania, 300 kms away.

After considering all the previously mentioned aspects, Patrir, the HEAL partner in Romania has organized 2 sessions of round-table discussions on the Zoom platform. The first one took place on the 25th of June and 6 people (2 representatives of TCN VoT, 2 service providers and 2

employers) were invited. Due to the limited availability and change in the engagement level of the participants only 4 of them participated: 1 employer, 1 service provider and 2 representatives of TCN VoT (that are service providers themselves in the field of migration). The session lasted one hour and a half and the discussion centred on the impact of the pandemic on the economy in general as well as possible solutions for the future. The session was recorded and transcribed and the participants were sent a summary before the next session. The second round-table discussion was held on the 30th of June and 7 people were invited, including 2 experts in human trafficking. A total of 5 people participated: 1 employer, 2 service providers, 2 representatives of VoT and 1 expert in trafficking because the other one had connectivity issues and got cut off after the first 15 mins. The session lasted for one hour and 45 mins and it focused on the legal and practical impediments in providing appropriate support for survivors of trafficking, as well as models of good practices that the professionals considered worthy of replication. The second session was also recorded and transcribed and the participants received a summary of the discussions before The European Networking Day.

For both sessions a total number of 7 people participated (including the two experts in human trafficking), of which 6 women and 1 man. Two professionals working with migrants, refugees and asylum-seekers in LADO and AIDRom represented the needs of TCN VoT, two people represented the service providers, one psychologist and one integration officer at LADO, while one person represented the employers who has a long experience working in HR and PR in the HORECA sector. For the second session we also invited two experts on human trafficking, one university professor and the president of one of the oldest independent NGOs offering services to underaged victims of human trafficking in Romania in order to obtain more detailed and accurate information on the rights and services available to victims today.

The conversation went smoothly, the participants got acquainted quickly, the second meeting had the feeling of an informal meeting between friends, at first they were more formal and less open but by the end of the second session we were planning to meet each other face to face. On the professional level we found that the people working in trafficking didn't know much about the work done in the field of migration and vice-versa. They were curious to find out about each other's professional activity, but truly bridging this gap will take more than two meetings (as it involves collaboration with different institutions and stakeholders).

6.5. Findings from the roundtable in Romania

6.5.1. Local market needs

The first session of the local roundtables was the one dedicated to the subject of the local labour market. One of the most important developments with a significant impact on the future activities of the HEAL project was the COVID-19 pandemic and the economic recession that followed. At the time of the roundtable the participants agreed that the economy was just starting to feel the consequences of the recession and that even well-meaning and considerate employers that have held on to their employees applying different schemes arrived at the end of their resources and many had to downscale significantly or entirely close-up shop. The businesses that were most affected at this point were local small/medium businesses, particularly the ones in the HORECA sector, where even bigger corporations made most of their employees redundant. Therefore, we are witnessing a important restructuring of the local labour market with a relatively large number of people looking for jobs and many people who had been laid-off finding employment in other sectors.

Even if the HORECA sector is the hardest hit sector by the economic recession caused by the pandemic, it will probably be the sector with the greatest need of workforce once the economy picks up and people start travelling again. As we have found in the needs assessment phase housekeeping jobs were considered to be suitable places of potential employment for victims of trafficking (working in small teams and minimal interaction with the clients) the participants in the roundtable foresaw that there will be numerous openings. Unfortunately, the insecurity regarding the timeline of the process is affecting employers and business owners as well as people looking for employment.

At the moment job openings are concentrated in the production sector, the supermarkets and the fields that have come to be referred to as essential like cleaning or different medical services.

6.5.2. Soft and employment-related needs

One of the most important pieces of information that emerged following the first session of roundtables was to clarify that when considering the employment possibilities of TCN VoT one needs to take into account the legal framework that regulates this issue. There are different categories of TCN that have different work rights in Romania. Refugees, persons under international protection and family members of Romanian citizens have similar work-rights to Romanians with the exception of a few strategic sectors like the army; asylum-seekers also benefit from very similar work-rights as Romanians, but only after three months of their official

request for asylum, but it is a right dependent on the always changing status of their asylum request; people from third countries that are in Romania on student visas have their work-rights restricted to a part-time scheme, i.e. they can only work 4 hours a day; foreigners that arrived in Romania based on work-visas are entitled to stay in the country based on their employment contract and in case they have to switch employers they are allowed by law a window of 90 days to find a new job and complete all the necessary administrative procedure in order to avoid illegal stay. Romanian law also regulates the residence permits of officially identified victims of human trafficking, who are entitled to stay in the country for the duration of the judicial process if they file an official complaint against their traffickers, a process that can take up to several years depending on the case.

The participants at the round-table discussions agreed that in order to empower survivors of trafficking they need to receive support not only during their search for employment but also during the first two months of being employed, ideally in the form of services offered by the employer in collaboration with the support service provider. This is why it is so important that the matching between the person and the job is very personalized and based on the individual needs of the person and the particular needs of the employer. On-site training would be greatly advantageous for such vulnerable employees, because these could be more practical and more closely fitting to the training needs of each employee with particular focus on the language that they are delivered in (e.g. English). One of the biggest assets that a foreigner can have in the Romanian job market is to speak or at least understand Romanian. The language courses offered at the moment are quite inefficient and it takes more than one year to gain fluency in Romanian for a foreigner. Thus, intensive Romanian language courses following the German model, 6 months for 6 hours a day would greatly benefit newly arrived job-seekers. Often finding accommodation on the free market is full of obstacles connected to prejudice and communication issues, so accommodation arranged by the employers would assist the smoother integration of the survivors.

6.5.3. Opportunities for employment

As we already mentioned under local market needs the labour market in Cluj and Romania is undergoing significant shifts as a reaction to the pandemic. On the one hand many people have become unemployed, while on the other many have returned from different European countries and are looking for employment in Romania. Both present challenges when it comes to the employment of third country nationals or any kinds of vulnerable people. Having said that there are a few important sectors that are still hiring, like the production sector e.g.

DeLonghi is still in need of new employees. The fact that a few other corporations are also looking for new employees are a good opportunity especially because one of the conclusions of our needs assessment was that corporate employment is preferable for the survivors of trafficking because these companies have the most resources to support their employees.

As essential businesses, supermarkets are still in need of employees, but these jobs are only suitable after the language barrier is overcome.

For TCNs with digital skills IT companies are also an opportunity, as they train people on site and English is overwhelmingly spoken. They may even be willing to disregard the lack of official qualifications and be more interested in the actual performance capabilities of the new employees. As far as entrepreneurship is concerned there are a few success stories of involving Romanian survivors of sex trafficking who have managed successful self-employment schemes (in the beauty sector), but in order to explore this possibility the initial investment (training and material) as well as the legislation regarding TCN rights to start businesses needs to be carefully considered.

6.5.4. Overcoming employer's reluctance to employing migrant women due to prejudice or administrative obstacles

Despite focusing on finding ways to support vulnerable employees, it has become clear during the round-table discussions that companies also need guidance as potential places of employment for TCN VoTs in particular regarding the legislative procedures for hiring non-EU citizens. Awareness raising with the employers about working with vulnerable persons is needed. The regulations in this regard are cumbersome and time consuming, therefore many small/medium sized companies without a legal team struggle to navigate the legal requirements around hiring foreigners. One of the solutions offered through the HEAL project could be a package of information targeting the employer in simplified form just enough to put them at ease that they are conforming to the legal requirements. Here again it is important to stress that the matching between the person and the job should be very personalized and based on the specific needs of both the employer and the employee, considering the particularities of each.

Awareness raising among employers about hiring TCN is another way to make them more receptive to hiring from this group. They could be exchanging experiences with businesses who have employed foreigners in order to see the advantages and prepare for the challenges that such a decision would entail.

In regular circumstances employers in this area are interested in how to attract loyal, dependable employees that they would be willing to invest in. When the effects of the pandemic will start to fade there will be a heightened interest in the database meant to connect employers with employees from different parts of the world, so extending it to other categories of migrants would make it even more attractive.

6.5.5. Rights of TCN women VoT and available services at local level

In the second session of the round-table discussion the participants addressed the rights of victims of trafficking, which by law encompass social assistance and support, financial compensation, protection from human rights violations, work rights, reintegration, reflection period and legal residence during the judicial procedure. The legal framework is well aligned to the European recommendations in this respect, but in practice no services are compulsory and the state doesn't take any measures to hold the local and county authorities accountable for not providing them. Consequently, these victim rights are only accessible if they exist and less wealthy local administrations are incapable of making them accessible. At present Cluj is in a very similar situation when there is only one shelter with 10 places for victims of trafficking on the county level for Romanian underage survivors. Although initially designed for the reception of women victims up to 26 years of age, the shelter admits Romanian citizens under the age of 18 officially referred to by the police or the court, where they are assisted in all aspects of reintegration, including employment.

There are no NGOs in the area that offer live-in services to victims, but there are a few (e.g. Artemis, Eliberare) that offer counselling sessions and legal support for victims of trafficking. A few NGOs active in the field of genderbased violence used to run shelters periodically, but unfortunately these have been only temporary because of the finite financial resources that these organizations could secure.

The judicial system in Romania that is meant to hold the perpetrators of human trafficking accountable is very inefficient in this regard. Different levels of corruption, untrained judges and prosecutors, as well as an underdeveloped system of protection for the victims all play into a very low level of convictions and a significant number of recidivisms. Financial compensation is a point in case. Only a handful of victims request it and even a smaller number receive it, because sometimes it costs more to go through the procedure than the amount granted. Another one is social housing for example. Despite being allowed priority for securing social housing none of the trafficking victims in the Cluj county have ever received social housing

mostly because social housing units are very scarce. There is a similar situation with employment. Despite the fact that at the local employment center there is a service dedicated to assisting victims of trafficking, the professionals working in this field could never access it, because their requests were rejected.

6.5.6. Good practices and challenges

There is one model of good practices that keeps coming up when discussing support services offered to victims of trafficking. It is the model implemented for example by the ADPARE organization in Bucharest which is based on a very personalized approach of social assistance. For each survivor they establish an individual plan of recovery, including decisions about the budget and agree together on the best course of action within that financial limit. Ideally in a shelter the individual budget should be 2000-3000 Euros per person, which would cover everything from food and shelter to training courses and possible initial investment for entrepreneurial ideas.

As a more general idea of good practices, the participants at the round-table discussion have concluded that given the fact that in the HEAL project the beneficiaries are doubly vulnerable persons (both as foreigners as well as victims of trafficking) long-term direct assistance would be required, performed by social workers that would counsel and accompany these women and teach them how to navigate the system.

As far as challenges are concerned these are quite numerous. The main challenge is more general and it refers to an underdeveloped system of social assistance which affects all vulnerable and marginalized groups in Romania. Different reasons have contributed to the fact that social assistance offered to TCN (especially if not refugees or asylum-seekers) are virtually non-existent, or rudimentary at best. Given the intersection of the particular type of vulnerabilities that burden the target group in HEAL the state sponsored social support system is unable to address these issues (as in the description under the previous subtitle).

The cracks in the judicial system also contribute to the disadvantages experienced by the trafficking survivors, and ends up discouraging them from seeking justice or reparations.

6.5.7. Strategies to overcome the identified weaknesses

The challenges and weaknesses of the social service sector that were identified during the second session of the round-table discussions were admittedly wide ranging and systematic.

Therefore, it would be particularly difficult to offer strategies to surmount these within the scope of a single pioneering project. However, the participants managed to propose a few ideas that could contribute to improvements.

In the context of the HEAL project it would be sensible to operationalize a more inclusive definition of human trafficking that can be extended to people on working visas as well as to the family members of Romanian citizens and could include grey areas of work exploitation/sexual exploitation or domestic violence/sexual violence.

Independent NGOs have proven to be more flexible regarding their beneficiaries or the criteria upon which they extend their services. Thus, collaboration with more NGOs as opposed to state institutions may result in more benefits for TCN survivors of human trafficking.

Social integration is a complex endeavour which includes integration in the labour market, but is also conditioned by integration into a community, especially if the person has a different cultural and linguistic background. Long-term and consistent awareness raising and cultural exchange activities organized together with the local community where TCNs want to live are a good way to promote acceptance and integration.

In order to reach the goal of empowerment it is important to promote a process of integration that is participative enough for the survivor to have the possibility to make decisions for themselves at each stage of the process, including budgeting.

6.6. Conclusions and recommendations

The two sessions of round-table discussions organized online at the end of June in Romania as one of the activities of the HEAL project succeeded in bringing forward a more nuanced and detailed perspective on the opportunities and challenges that face the integration on the labour market of TCN survivors of sex trafficking. The first session concentrated on the existing opportunities and obstacles on the local job market, while the second one addressed the rights of TCN VoT and the opportunities and challenges of accessing them.

The most important issue that transpired from the first session was the effect of the economic recession caused by the pandemic on employers and job-seekers alike. On the one hand many businesses severely downscaled or went bankrupt, while on the other hand there is a significant restructuring of the labour market characterized by the a (temporary) excess of workforce.

The recommendations in this case would be to plan on the long term and try to foresee when the economy is going to recover. In the meantime, concentrate on sectors that are still employing and the specific skills that they require, especially language training.

Given the complexity of the issue of employment for TCNs in Romania another important recommendation is to carefully document the legal framework around work-rights for non-EU citizens and offer some type of simplified information about this to potential employers (included in the database), as well as basic work-rights training to potential employees in order to minimize as much as possible illegal or exploitative situations.

As far as assessing the type of support needed, it is very clear that the needs of TCNs regarding the labour market are individual and personalized and it makes sense to personalize their assistance accordingly either in the form of assisting in the official recognition of diplomas or certificates for those who have similar work-rights to Romanian citizens, or providing legal assistance and HR counselling to those with limited work rights (students, or persons on work-visas). The matching of employment with employee should be done in a suitably personalized manner as well, with a careful consideration for particular needs and desires.

In the second session the participants, assisted by two experts from the field of trafficking accomplished a thorough mapping of the opportunities and challenges in offering support to the victims of trafficking. They agreed that although the legislation is quite overarching and mostly synchronized with similar regulations in other European countries, there is a glaring discrepancy between what the law allows for and what services are accessible in practice. Cluj is a case in point with just a single shelter covering all the support services needed by victims of trafficking which only receives officially identified, underage, Romanian victims. TCN victims of sex trafficking are not catered for by the social support system at present. The instability in the judicial process which is fraught by many problems and has very low conviction rates acts as a deterrent to seeking justice and reparation.

In this regard a recommendation would be to for the local and county authorities to invest in and ensure the long-term financing of NGOs with an established record in providing support for victims of trafficking in order to make this support stable and consequent.

The incapacity to offer proper social services to the victims of trafficking is not a special problem, but it is just part of a generally underdeveloped and underfinanced social service sector which is unfavorable to all types of marginalized or vulnerable populations and for victims of trafficking from third countries in particular.

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