

Manual for Work on SOS Hotline for (Potential) Victims of Human Trafficking





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NGO ASTRA Experience



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## Authors' Preface

ASTRA SOS Hotline started its operation in 2002. Since then, almost ten thousand calls have been received. So far it has served as the only SOS hotline intended for (potential) victims of trafficking in persons in the Republic of Serbia; at the time of its setting up it was one of the rare services of the kind in South-East Europe.

During the first eight years of work a methodology has been developed, results achieved, some of the dilemmas have not yet been solved and the new ones have appeared. We would like to share our experiences with the expert public. We also nourish hope that our long-term experience in this field, although we are pretty much self-taught, will be useful for those who are planning to establish a similar hotline. We believe that this Manual will also help the ones who have organized other types of SOS telephones (for fighting family violence, violence against children, etc.), because trafficking in human beings may be a consequence of some other form of violence or may be hidden behind it. Although the Manual is intended for individuals who already have some experience in the anti-trafficking field, we nevertheless start with a brief definition and description of the problem for the sake of those who might be faced with this form of severe human rights violation for the first time.

At the very start, principles and methodology of work that had been developed for ten preceding years in the Belgrade women's NGOs that were engaged in anti-violence activities, particularly the SOS Hotline and Centre for Girls and the Autonomous Women's Centre were the basis for our work, and we would like to avail ourselves of this opportunity to thank them. ASTRA SOS Hotline has been developing its activities by directly following field actions and trends related to trafficking of human beings; we have adapted the accepted principles and work methods according to circumstances in this new and totally different scope. Of utmost importance are our contacts with partner organizations in the region and beyond, i.e. meetings where we have exchanged our experiences. Unfortunately, conferences on the SOS hotlines are very rare. This is the reason why we would like to present in this Manual experiences of other SOS telephones, both in Serbia and in South-Eastern Europe, as well as certain tendencies in the member states of the European Union.

In our Manual, we have used for the **ones who make phone calls** either descriptive terms or the word **client/clients**. We have not found a better word, and the translation of the English word *caller* does not seem adequate. For the persons **who receive calls on the SOS Hotline** we use the word **consultant**. We have decided not to use the translation of the English word counsellor (very common in professional counselling centers), because the term means giving advice about problems, which is contrary to our work principles.

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We have decided to use the word **victim** and not the word **survivor**, bearing in mind the psychological interpretation that the “**survivor** offers an objective picture of a person who has preserved, by surviving a complex trauma, a certain level of capacity to recover and to go on living”<sup>1</sup>; we prefer the term **victim** from the view of human rights and protection, where this term is used for a person who suffers injustice caused by the perpetrator who is fully responsible for it.<sup>2</sup>

We have decided to use the mentioned terms at the beginning of work of ASTRA SOS Hotline.

In the Manual we have expressed some of our dilemmas in order to encourage a constructive discussion. We invite you to give your comments. Thus, we will be able to improve our work and provide that our response and activities are in the best interest of the clients.

Authors  
In Belgrade, December 2009

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1 Biljana Slavković, page 93 of this Manual

2 Billings et al, 2005





# Chapter 1

## Introduction

### 1.1. What is trafficking in persons?

Although it has existed for the most part of human history, slavery is nowadays considered to have been rooted out. However, it has continued its existence in its new modern shape – as trafficking in persons. Trafficking in persons is one of the most serious problems of our time, as it infringes on the very fundamental human rights: the right to life, freedom and security, the right to free movement, and the right to freedom of choice.

Millions of women, children and men are forced to prostitution, serving in houses, work on plantations, begging or are exposed to some other forms of exploitation. No country in the world has been spared; developing countries, countries going through political and economic transition, underdeveloped countries, countries at war and post-conflict countries most frequently serve as countries of origin of the victims, while economically developed countries serve as countries of transit, final destination and exploitation of victims. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) estimates that at any time there are 12.3 million people in the world who are exposed to forced labour, 2.4 million of whom are victims of trafficking (50 per cent of them being children).<sup>3</sup>

Trafficking in persons is considered one of the three most lucrative criminal activities besides drug trafficking and illegal weapons trade. It is usually referred to as a highly profitable business with low risk involved, where traffickers' profits estimated at between a few billion up to as much as 60 or even 500<sup>4</sup> billion dollars annually, with minimum seed capital. On the other hand, from the statistical point of view, very few traffickers end up in court or are sentenced to long imprisonment.

Trafficking in persons is often equalled to problems of illegal migrations, smuggling or prostitution. Although human traffickers and people smugglers use the same routes, and most persons fall victim to trafficking out of a wish to migrate, i.e. trafficking and smuggling are affected by the same *push* and *pull* factors (poverty, unemployment, war and instability, marginalisation and discrimination, violence etc.), smuggling implies an illegal entry to another country based on the principle of willingness and not that of exploitation. With regard to prostitution, with due respect to the complexity of the circumstances and conditions which make a woman become

<sup>3</sup> ILO Against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2008

<sup>4</sup> [http://www.endhumantraffickingnow.com/public/structure/1\\_1.html](http://www.endhumantraffickingnow.com/public/structure/1_1.html)

involved in prostitution, we are (still) taking about a person's free choice, which is not the case with sexual exploitation as a form of trafficking in persons.

Whichever form of exploitation is discussed, the victims of trafficking will not have conceded willingly to the situation they are in, nor can they get out of the situation with their own decision only.

### ***1.1.1. The existing approaches to the problem of trafficking in persons and suitable strategies***

The definition of trafficking in human beings has been the subject of major discussions within the anti-trafficking movement. Since trafficking in women is a complex issue, interlaced with various and often conflicting interests of the state on the one hand, and non-governmental organisations on the other, finding a definition for this phenomenon becomes even more important.

In drawing up draft anti-trafficking measures or policies, the language used in the definition may lead to making a difference between the law, policies or measures taken in order to help women and those by which women are re-victimised later.

UN Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, i.e. its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings, Especially Women and Children, in Article 3 defines trafficking in persons as follows:

- (a) 'Trafficking in persons' shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;
- (b) The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
- (c) The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered 'trafficking in persons' even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) of this article;
- (d) 'Child' shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

Marjan Wijers<sup>5</sup> from Dutch Foundation against Trafficking in Women sheds new light on this issue by distinguishing several approaches to the issues of trafficking in persons and the follow-up strategies. An approach to the problem determines how a country or non-governmental organisation should act and which strategy they should choose in combating trafficking in persons. The approaches vary, ranging from repressive strategies, the aim of which is to suppress organised crime, illegal migrations or prostitution, to the empowerment strategies, whose aim is giving support to women and the strengthening of, i.e. improvement of women's rights.

Both approaches have their merits. However, Ms Wijers warns of the danger of mixing these approaches and interests of the non-governmental sector, as these interests are very often conflicting. For example, the interest of non-governmental organisations is to protect and help the victims, while the government's primary interest is to prevent illegal migrations and organised crime. The mixing of the two interests, as well as the conflicting approaches may have detrimental effects on women who are the victims of trafficking. One of these consequences are, for example, the restriction of the freedom of movement of women in the form of visa denials or a ban to enter a particular country, or for that matter, the use of women as witnesses in the fight against organised crime without offering them suitable protection in such cases.

### ***Trafficking in women as a moral issue***

Fight against trafficking in women = fight against prostitution. Criminalize all involved in prostitution, including or excluding prostitutes themselves. Rescue and rehabilitate prostitutes.

According to Ms Wijers, this approach is most frequently used and it regards women and prostitution as something evil (whether unavoidable or not), which needs to be under control. From this perspective, the aim of actions against trafficking in women is to establish control over and punish all the parties involved in the problem. The shortcoming of this approach is that it leads to the stigmatization of women.

### ***Trafficking in women as an organised crime problem***

Fight against trafficking in women = fight against organised crime. More severe punishment, closer international collaboration, especially police cooperation. More efficient judiciary and prosecution.

The approach to this problem as a problem of organised crime aims at introducing stricter forms of punishment, as well as closer cooperation of international police forces and improvement of other measures, which would enable efficient prosecution of the offenders. This approach also poses risks to women in terms of personal

<sup>5</sup> Marjan Wijers, Lin Lap-Chew, Foundation Against Trafficking in Women in the Netherlands (1997), taken over from *Trafficking in Women – Manual for Journalists*, ASTRA, Belgrade, 2003, 2009

safety risks and protection of women, as these are all subsumed under the court prosecution. Criminal approach also strikes women who have often been labelled under the law because they deal in prostitution or are illegal migrants.

### ***Trafficking in women as a problem of illegal migration***

Fight against trafficking in women = fight against migration. Ban possible victims of trafficking from entering the country, stricter visa regime, better border control. Closer supervision over “mixed marriages”. Criminalization of mediators who enable illegal entry and stay of migrants in the country. Criminalization of illegal migrants.

In this approach, trafficking in persons is a problem of illegal migration, so that the actions taken aim at “having women stay home in their countries”, which is achieved through stricter control of border crossings and supervision over mixed marriages.

This approach in fact reflects a state’s interest in protecting itself from unwelcome foreigners.

### ***Trafficking in women as a problem of law and order***

Fight against trafficking in women = state control over prostitution. Regulate prostitution so as to protect law and order, nation’s health, public morals and tax collection.

This approach sees trafficking in women and prostitution as the law and order issue and the issue of nation’s health. The solution can be greater control of the situation by introducing measures such as mandatory health checks. According to Ms Wijers, all the laws regarding women involved in prostitution start from this idea.

### ***Trafficking in women as a problem of human rights***

Fight against trafficking in women = fight for the promotion and protection of human rights. Promotion and protection of human rights of victims of trafficking in women include the right to legal remedy, legal protection, non-discriminative treatment and restitution, compensation and rehabilitation.

Raising the issue of trafficking in women as a problem of human rights offers two-prong analysis: prostitution is in its essence a violation of human rights and should be banned; if prostitution is not a violation of human rights in its essence, then the conditions in which women involved in prostitution live are – frauds, abuse, violence, debt slavery, blackmails, restriction of the freedom of movement etc. These two types of analysis correspond to the ideological division in the global anti-trafficking movement in its part related to prostitution, which are underpinned by two different global coalitions.

## ***Trafficking in women as a problem of labour rights***

Fight against trafficking in women = promotion and protection of labour rights of women in the informal sectors, including sex workers and domestic workers. The recognition of women's labour in the informal sectors as a legitimate form of labour, including work in the sex industry and housework. Improvement of working conditions. Integration of women's labour in the informal sector in the existing state, and international instruments for the protection of labour rights and the right to work.

This approach tells us that the phenomenon of trafficking in women should be regarded as a result of poor legal and social condition of women, especially their condition as females, female workers and female migrants. This approach requires that there be more opportunities in the field of employment as well as greater labour rights, including pensions and state benefits for women dealing in prostitution.

### ***1.1.2. The process of trafficking in persons***

Trafficking in persons is an international, complex and unique phenomenon including many other elements. Before we go on to discuss definitions, it is important to understand the actual structure and the structural parts of the crime in hand, in order to be able to fathom its nature and decide about effective counter-measures. The process of human trafficking may be divided into three phases: recruitment, transit and exploitation. However, for the purposes of this Manual the first and the last phase, i.e. the phase of recruitment and exploitation, will be explained in more detail.<sup>6</sup>

#### ***Recruitment phase (ways of recruiting victims)***

This is the beginning of a human trafficking process, i.e. a phase during which fraud, coercion, deception or kidnapping are used to find victims of sexual or other forms of exploitation.

#### ***Push and Pull factors in trafficking in persons***

There are three main elements which are favourable for the development of the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, and they are manifested:

- In the country of origin - steady supply of potential victims offers possibility of exploitation.
- In the destination country - a constant growth of sex markets, as well as of the market of cheap labour and services account for constant demand for services provided by the victims.

<sup>6</sup> See section *Types and Categories of Calls*

- In the conditions where there are organised crime networks: control over “supply and demand” (for trafficking and exploitation of victims with a view to generating enormous profits).

### ***General conditions in the countries undergoing transition***

The effects of conflicts, as well as the post-conflict situation and political and economic transition, which have marked East and South-East Europe in the past decade, have resulted in numerous political, social and cultural changes. These changes have accentuated the uneven “division of power” between men and women through increased poverty and high unemployment rate in general, particularly among women.<sup>7</sup>

In most of these countries it is women who had to bear the greatest part of the burden of economic transition because women are more exposed to unemployment and poverty. This is a consequence of the patriarchal structure of society as well as of the economic and professional discrimination against women. Therefore, widespread trafficking in women from East and South-East Europe must be regarded as one of the symptoms and results of the feminization of migration triggered by poverty and job-seeking.

Trafficking in persons is by no means typical only of European regions. Wars, extreme poverty, natural catastrophes, etc. have caused human trafficking to grow into a global problem of today, which has not spared a single country or a continent in the modern world.

### ***Gender discrimination***

In periods of crisis, such as a war conflict, or at a time when the unemployment rate grows, gender stereotypes often become more pronounced – men should be productive and act as “breadwinners”, while women should be excluded from professional life. In some countries, for example Moldova, there is no specific domestic law regulating gender-based discrimination, while research that has been conducted shows that women are often unaware of their right to equal treatment.<sup>8</sup>

In a great number of countries, there is no legislation prohibiting gender discrimination, whereas in the countries where the legislation does exist, it is not implemented as much as it should.

Moreover, there are no specific courses taught as part of law studies or in the course of practical training of lawyers or judges on how to prosecute in gender discrimina-

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7 Some scientists estimate that women account for 80 per cent of all the people who have lost their jobs in the past few years due to the economic crisis in Russia (Global Network).

8 Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Women 2000, An Investigation into the Status of Women's Rights in Central and South-Eastern Europe and until Recently Independent States*

tion cases.<sup>9</sup> So there is a lack of responsibility towards those who discriminate against women, and there is hardly any legal or other kind of assistance for victims.

### ***Discrimination in the labour market***

Women are exposed to both overt and covert discrimination when being employed and when doing their jobs<sup>10</sup>. Many employment ads contain requirements regarding years of age and the looks of female candidates; apart from this, they are exposed to sexual harassment and faced with obstacles in promotion; they rarely occupy the highest positions in companies and earn less than men<sup>11</sup>. The results of an econometric analysis of the salary differences indicate that, on an average, women make per month 17 per cent less than men, which can be attributed only to different evaluation of the same characteristics, i.e. discrimination<sup>12</sup>.

In a time of crisis, as well as in the process of company privatisation and restructuring, women are the first to be made redundant, especially if better-paid jobs are concerned. As they still bear the same primary responsibility when it comes to taking care of children and family, they are forced to seek employment in grey economy and in the informal labour market, where they are less protected against sexual harassment and exploitation and where the gender pay gap is much higher. The sex industry is a significantly expanded part of the informal sector, which renders women extremely exposed to high risks.<sup>13</sup> Therefore, when women are structurally denied access to official and regulated labour market, they are forced to venture into the unprotected criminal network leading up to sexual and/or housework exploitation.

### ***Social factors***

In hard economic times, social climate adds to the importance of the male role. Already socially weaker, women's positions become even weaker and less important. Besides, today many women and girls in the whole region are socially predisposed to see their bodies and sexuality as a means of earning a living. Therefore, marginalisation and discrimination of women in all aspects of social life persists, and they cannot

9 Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, *Women 2000, An Investigation into the Status of Women's Rights in Central and South-Eastern Europe and until Recently Independent*

10 Blagojevic M. (2004), *Položaj žena u zemljama Balkana - komparativni pregled*, GEEP Gender jednakost i ravnopravnost u BiH, Gender centar Vlade RS i Gender centar Vlade FBiH, Bosna i Hercegovina, page 94

11 Government of the Republic of Serbia (2005), *Report on the Realization of the Millennium Development Goals in the Republic of Serbia* – Women have a somewhat smaller annual pay (in 2003 – 97.9% as opposed to 100.0% for men), but the difference is particularly visible in some sectors (in 2003 – 83.0% as opposed to 100.0% for men in financial mediation).

12 UNDP and Gender Equality Council of the Republic of Serbia (2006), *Position of Women in the Serbian labour market*

13 UNICEF, *Women in transition*.

summon the courage to take on an active role in changing and running the society they live in.<sup>14</sup>

### ***Violence against women***

Violence against women, particularly family violence, also makes women more exposed to trafficking in persons. Family violence is a key factor which explains why many teenagers, young women, girls and boys want to leave their families and countries after they have been denied suitable protection. Thus, women who are facing unemployment, sexual harassment and domestic abuse, think that job offers for work abroad accompanied by good salaries present a possibility for a miraculous escape into a better world.

It may be concluded that the discriminating, negative “push” factors are the following: unemployment, poverty, lack of education, gender-based discrimination, survived violence and social marginalisation. On the other hand, the “pull” factors which increase the exposure and vulnerability of women and girls to the baits of traffickers are complementary to the “push” factors and have the same effect. These include imaginary advantages of life in richer Western societies, expectation of employment and financial benefits, access to material goods of the West, better social status and treatment, demand for cheap labour, presence of foreign troops in the region. It should be borne in mind that the offers by traffickers are usually the only ones that the possible victim will get, and that traffickers are often the only ones who show at least some simulated understanding, tenderness and support in the recruitment period.

### **Changes in the trends in trafficking in persons**

The trends in human trafficking are changing: traffickers are changing routes they use to transfer victims; recruitment methods are changing, as well as the victims’ age, etc. However, there is one trend that remains unchanged: victims are recruited in economically underdeveloped countries/regions and shipped into economically more developed countries. As the economic situation in certain countries/regions changes, so does their status: a final destination country becomes a source country – which has been the case with Serbia after its impoverishment in the 1990s, or vice versa - a country which has become economically more developed becomes a destination country, whereas it used to be only a source country.

The most concerning trend, however, is the decrease in the average age of victims of trafficking in many locations. Once more, this trend is a simple reflection of demands of clients, which are based on their beliefs and wishes. For example, trafficked chil-

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<sup>14</sup> *Trafficking in persons in South-East Europe, Review of the Current Situation and Responses to Trafficking in Persons in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, FYR Macedonia*, UNICEF, 2000

dren in some countries are increasingly involved in prostitution because clients believe that sex with children reduces the risk of catching sexually transmitted diseases.

Easy and fast adaptability implies the change of routes, but also hiring new girls and boys besides the exiting ones who will be getting in touch with and recruiting victims.

As a result of these trends, trafficking in persons can be described as a fundamental example of economic globalisation, especially in the case of sex industry.

### ***Destination (exploitation) stage***

When a person finds herself in the human trafficking chain, exploitation can be performed in various ways. Women are mostly forced to work in the sex industry, i.e. in quarters and streets of the cities which are a hotbed of prostitution and porn industry, in escort agencies or in apartments which are used as brothels, and in bars. However, their labour can also be exploited in private households and on farms, in various workshops, factories, etc. Children are most often sexually exploited and forced to beg, while adult males are exploited as workers on construction sites, in farms and the like. It is important to stress once again that women account for the highest percentage of victims of this form of criminal activity.

No matter which form of exploitation is in question, it happens under the harshest conditions possible. For the purposes of this Manual, we have attempted to point to some common points, but what should be taken into account is the fact that the reality of victims is always much worse than it can be described in a book or in a research paper. On the other hand, traffickers come up with ever more severe and perfidious ways of abuse with only one goal – to earn money, i.e. to make a profit. Abused persons are exposed to various forms of violence (psychological, physical and sexual) and torture so that traffickers can assume total control over them, break their resistance and ensure that the victims are submissive. So, for example, women who are forced into prostitution must have sex with a great number of clients on a daily basis, usually without protection, while traffickers do not hesitate to use drugs in order to control them. The victims usually work in the same place where they live. They have to do the cleaning, washing, cooking and ironing for the whole crew. Nourishment is poor and irregular. They are required to work extremely long hours and provide numerous clients with unprotected and dangerous sex services every day, without the possibility of refusing certain clients or activities. In short, women are exploited without the possibility of making their own decisions.

When talking about women who end up in the human trafficking chain, the wider public shows a tendency to judge whether a woman “wanted it”, “knew what she was involved in”, whether she is “naive and stupid”... What is overlooked is the fact that they have been tricked in terms of working conditions. In other words, they have

been made to believe that they were going abroad or to another city in order to work as waitresses, au-pair girls, models, factory workers, nurses or something of the kind. Once a person is recruited, and starts being abused and exploited, the motive of their leaving becomes unimportant. The very victims of human trafficking are often unaware that they are victims, and consider that they are to blame for what has befallen them; they also feel ashamed because of the jobs they have to do, and do not know where to seek help.

The main goal of traffickers is to earn money through long-term exploitation of victims. In order to achieve this, they are ready to do anything to protect their investment, i.e. to ensure smooth business and prevent any attempt of their victims to escape, using various control mechanisms to this end. The following are the most usually used control mechanisms:

### ***Imprisonment/isolation***

As we have already mentioned, persons who are in the trafficking chain have restricted freedom of movement. Their every single move is carefully monitored and they are not allowed to get in touch with strangers. They are unable to contact their families and they are isolated, which is why they gradually become dependent on the trafficker. This situation suits traffickers, so they even work on deepening the feeling of isolation and dependence in the people they abuse and exploit in order to persuade them that they are in a situation in which they cannot expect help from others, let alone from the state authorities or the police. Their lack of knowledge of the language, lack of money and necessary documentation, lack of confidence in the police and other institutions, illegal residence, fear, shame and isolation add to increased dependence of the victim on the trafficker.

Victims are often moved from one place to another so that they lose their sense of orientation (sometimes they do not know where they are or even in which country they are) in order to prevent them from making friends and getting familiar with the environment. They are also constantly moved in order to make it more difficult for the police to collect information and break up the chain of trafficking in persons.

By seizing their IDs and/or passports, victims are denied their officially verified identities. On the other hand, this is a way of confirming their illegal status and making it impossible for them to seek help or escape to another country or hide at another address. Knowing that many victims come from countries where the police are seen more as a cruel force than someone who can lend a helping hand, victims themselves avoid getting in contact with the police and asking them for help. The trafficker further reinforces such an image by telling the victim that she is free to go to the police if she wants to, but that she will be immediately deported and returned to her home country, where she will face the consequences. As an alternative, the trafficker may tell the vic-

tim that there is no point in asking help from the police as policemen are corrupted and indebted to traffickers (among other things, because they have been compromised for (free) use of sexual services). Unfortunately, in many cases traffickers have proved to be right when they talked about corruption or deportation, i.e. banishment from the country. Apart from this, in some countries, upon their return deportees are legally persecuted for prostitution or illegally leaving the country. Also, they can be required to pay the deportation costs which only add to their previous debts.

### ***Threats and use of violence/the causing of fear***

Traffickers in persons use violence and/or threats of violence as an effective means of control. Victims are often beaten up and raped, restricted from moving freely, kept in long-term isolation, deprived of food and water, drugged and tortured with sharp objects and cigarettes with a sole purpose – to be subdued and broken down. These activities may be used to punish certain forms of disobedience, but also as a way of warning other victims so that they become aware of the consequences they would suffer in case of their disobedience. In other cases, physical and/or sexual violence is directed to a victim simply as a result of sexual sadism. When it comes to sexual exploitation, the embarrassment the victim feels is another important control mechanism. The trafficker may threaten to reveal the fact that the victim works as a prostitute to her family. In that way traffickers ensure the victim's full compliance with their orders.

### ***Use or threat of use of repression directed to the victim's family***

One of the most effective threats are, of course, threats of violent repression directed towards persons that the victim loves, i.e. to her nearest and dearest, as well as threats to the victim herself. In many cases traffickers try to find out accurate information on the victim's family or persons she is close to. That could be an intimate nickname of a close member of the family or an address of another close person. The very threat gives room for control over the victim so it is not necessary that the trafficker has all the information about the victim's family. Since the victim does not want to put her dearest at stake, she does not even get into speculation whether or not the trafficker "is bluffing" when probing into the intimate details and when they use threats of violence towards her family. The trafficker uses those threats as a very efficient way of ensuring the victim's submission, as well as a way of preventing her attempts to escape. These threats are often effectuated because if a woman dares to escape and is consequently found, both the woman and her family face retribution. Murders committed in order to intimidate other victims are not a rare thing in this business.

### ***Debt bondage***

One of the primary control mechanisms is debt bondage, which implies that the victim is required to pay off exaggerated costs, which allegedly cropped up when the

victim was brought to the destination country, or other alleged costs which the trafficker had to cover for the victim's food, clothes, make-up... At the same time, they are promised to be able to go as soon as they have paid off their debt. Exaggerated and cumulative interest rates usually accrue these costs, which are then further accompanied by the trafficker's request that the victim pay preposterously high prices for hotel stays, costs of advertising services and transport costs. All of that finally amounts to a sum that becomes impossible to pay off. The trafficker often manipulates these alleged costs, raising and reducing them depending on the victim's "behaviour". She is convinced that she will be free once she has paid off her "debt", but in fact this is just one of the mechanisms whereby victims are kept in a submissive position.

### ***When the chain snaps...***

The text above has discussed "working methods" used by traffickers to intimidate women and make them feel helpless and stigmatised. Even if they muster up enough courage and strength to escape or endure long enough to live to see a police raid (which is what in fact happens in most cases), that does not mean they would walk out of the cycle of violence.

Most victims of trafficking go back to the situation from which they wanted to escape – people around them do not know and do not want to know what has happened to them, they do not have an explanation as to why they have returned home without money, they are scared, feel humiliated, believing that they are the only ones who have experienced something like that. More often than not the family and institutions shirk any responsibility and merely impose the feeling of guilt and shame, so girls often do not wish to return home. We should not forget that there are local criminals thriving in the same environment who can track them down and sell them again.

On the one hand, in some countries the law treats victims as criminals, illegal migrants who are breaking the country's law. On the other hand, society and the wider public do not think that women who end up in forced prostitution have been tricked – they are seen as prostitutes doing something that is socially stigmatised.

What women who have survived horrible physical violence (beating up, putting out of cigarettes all over their body), sexual violence (rape), psychological violence (abuse, threats, blackmail, control) need is a safe environment to start with. It takes them some time to re-establish contact and gain confidence in persons who offer them support. Women who have been through a trauma often feel that the same situation is repeating through flashbacks and nightmares. Some of them avoid situations that could remind them of the traumatic event whether these are people, places, objects or overwhelming feelings or memories of the traumatic event.

## 1.2. Definition of victims of trafficking in persons and other related terms

The term “victim” has sparked off much discussion in the context of violence against women because many believe that the expression is more reflective of powerlessness than of the victim’s resistance/resilience. The term “survivor” is used instead.

However, in the context of human rights protection, the term “victim” is used to define a person who has suffered injustice for which the perpetrator is to blame. This term suggests that a person or persons, whose human rights have been violated, have the right to protection, help and compensation.<sup>15</sup>

Proper definition of the term “victim” is of great importance for later successful identification of trafficking victims.

More about preliminary identification through SOS hotline could be read in the article by Viktoria Docketcu, La Strada Moldova (page 109).

In Annex 1, you can find the list of indicators taken from the Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons.<sup>16</sup>

### 1.2.1. Definition of victims of trafficking in persons

While it is only indirectly referred to in the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organised Crime, i.e. in its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children<sup>17</sup> (Palermo Protocol), the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings<sup>18</sup> gives a definition of the meaning of the term “**victim of trafficking in human beings**” in **Article 4, paragraph e**:

#### ***Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings*** **Article 4 – Definitions**

Within the meaning of this Convention:

- (a) “trafficking in human beings” means recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person for the purpose of exploitation.

<sup>15</sup> Billings et al, 2005

<sup>16</sup> UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings, 2008

<sup>17</sup> United Nations 55/25

<sup>18</sup> Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings European Treaty Series - No. 197

Exploitation includes at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs.

- (b) the consent of a victim of “trafficking in human beings” to the intended exploitation set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in sub-paragraph (a) have been used;
- (c) recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring and receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation are regarded as trafficking in human beings even if the means referred to in sub-paragraph (a) have not been used;
- (d) “child” is any person under 18 years of age;
- (e) “victim” is any natural person who is subjected to trafficking in human beings as defined in this Article.

### ***1.2.2. Presumed and possible victim of trafficking in persons***

In working with victims of trafficking in persons, there are other terms which have not been defined in the international documents. What usually happens in practical work is that a single term is used to define multiple situations, which can often cause confusion. Further down in the text the usage of the terms “presumed victim” and “possible victim” are presented in the way it has been used based on the year-long experience on ASTRA SOS Hotline. This distinction is particularly important because it has made it possible to follow cases through various stages without speculating about the final outcome. This is also important when it comes to statistics: namely, presumed and potential victims are not presented in the reports on the number of identified victims over a certain period, but they are shown separately.

#### ***Presumed victim***

The term “presumed victim” is used in two cases:

1. A person who, according to the information available, may be presumed, but not claimed with certainty, to be a victim of trafficking, and whom it is not possible to interview, is considered to be a presumed victim.

The information about presumed victims are indirect, i.e. parents, friends and other persons reporting such a case have some information about the missing persons, such as for example an advertisement the person answered to (way of recruitment), who they were in touch with, whether they had or did not have a valid passport (with a visa), whether they have called anyone and, if they have – who, how they sounded etc.

2. All persons who wind up in well-known recruitment patterns or in circles of infamous traffickers may be deemed presumed victims.

We recognise these patterns in direct work with clients. In addition, we often know who traffickers are.<sup>19</sup>

In our opinion, the term “presumed victim” is not used correctly when it is used to refer to particularly vulnerable groups. So, for example, poor and unemployed young women, etc. are generally equalled with the term presumed victims.

### ***Possible victim***

A person who, according to those reporting the case, has been missing (and we have no indications to presume that human trafficking is involved) is considered a possible victim in our practice.

So, although we **do not** have any information on the whereabouts of a person, or where he/she was last seen, who he/she was talking to, and whether anybody has offered him/her a job etc., we consider a person to be a **possible** victim and start working on the actual case. Therefore, we believe that it is more justifiable to invest efforts looking for a person who might not be in real danger of trafficking than to lose track of a possible or a real victim.

## 1.3. Victims of trafficking in persons

There are numerous factors which may cause certain persons to be particularly vulnerable when it comes to trafficking in persons. The most important social factors are:

- Poverty
- No access to education
- Lack of employment opportunities
- War/life in war surroundings
- Transition, as it comprises many of the listed factors
- Belonging to marginalised ethnic groups
- Heavily disturbed family relationships and the existence of violence

<sup>19</sup> For instance, one of the biggest Serbian traffickers used to recruit girls by having his son start “romantic relationship” with them or employ them in the café he owned. Only later would he offer them to go abroad.

This list is not exhaustive because trafficking in persons, being a highly dynamic category, brings about frequent changes in trends: traffickers use any negative change on a local, regional and even global scale in order to make profit out of it.

It is hard to say which groups are particularly vulnerable when it comes to trafficking in persons without labelling already determined marginalised groups. As regards adults, victims can be individuals or groups affected by one of the above mentioned factors.<sup>20</sup>

Considering children, we shall quote the report *Children Speak Out*.<sup>21</sup> “in the consultation process with the representatives of services providing social, criminal and legal protection to children and assisting illegal migrants, victims of trafficking, exploitation and other forms of abuse, the following are considered to be at-risk groups:

- Children from marginalised ethnic groups
- Children living in extreme poverty
- Children living or working on the street
- Children placed in social protection facilities
- Illegal migrant children
- Internally displaced children.”

We still bear witness to the fact that when victims of trafficking are mentioned in public, we most often hear that these are young girls between 18 and 25 years of age, foreign citizens particularly from Moldova, Ukraine, Russia, as well as uneducated and/or naive persons.

Since March 2002, 314 victims of trafficking in persons have been identified via ASTRA SOS Hotline. Based on the information we had on all of these persons, we have drawn up an analysis of social and demographic indicators.

### *Gender*

The greatest number of victims that have been identified were WOMEN. However, more forms of trafficking in which males are being exploited (forced labour, etc.) have been recorded recently. Current statistics shows that ten percent of victims are male. (Chart 1).

Despite the existing upward trend in the number of males identified as victims of trafficking, the gender component of this phenomenon should not be disregarded.

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<sup>20</sup> Based on the experience we have had so far, it is important that we add to this list children and women who are in constant touch with notorious traffickers.

<sup>21</sup> Žegarac N. (2007), *Children Speak Out. Trafficking Risk and Resilience in Southeast Europe. Report for Serbia*, Save the Children UK, Belgrade

Also, the fact that trafficking in women, especially through sexual exploitation, is yet another form of violence against women, should not be overlooked in the surge of newly created policies in the field of human trafficking.

The sex of victims of trafficking from March 2002 to June 2009

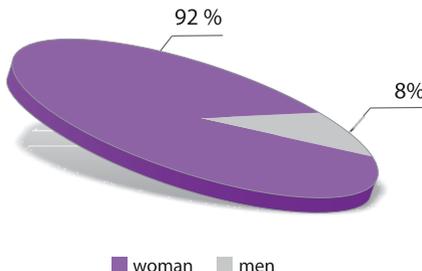


Chart 1

### Age

According to ASTRA SOS Hotline statistics, the age of victims of human trafficking has been changing year after year. In other words, more and more victims at a young age have been identified over the years. For example, in 2002 and 2003, 90% of identified victims were adults, whereas since 2004 the age structure has changed dramatically, with the share of children often exceeding 50% (Chart 2). We still cannot determine whether this is the result of a more developed methodology in identifying younger victims or it is about real increase of the proportion of children in human trafficking.

Number of children victims of trafficking (March 2002 - June 2009)

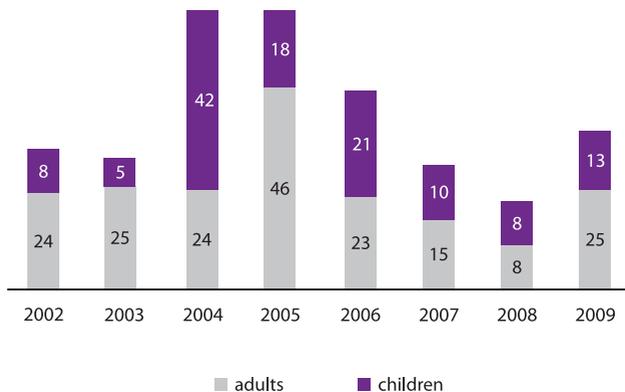


Chart 2

It should be mentioned that there is some 7 percent of women, victims of sexual exploitation, at the age of 30 or 35, who are most often not taken into account when talking about human trafficking. The oldest victim who has been identified thanks to ASTRA SOS Hotline is 49 years old.

### *Citizenship*<sup>22</sup>

As our statistics has covered eight years of practice, we can use it to track certain changes in the number of foreign and domestic victims. Namely, the number of foreign nationals identified as trafficked persons in Serbia has been shrinking since 2005 (charts 3 and 4). There are a few explanations for this trend:

1. For quite some time Serbia served as an important transit point in trafficking girls from Eastern to Western Europe, most often to Italy. Organised criminal groups had an elaborate logistical infrastructure and local support in the field. It can be assumed that they recruited local girls, using an already existing network in the field, and transferred them to Western Europe.<sup>23</sup> Can we conclude that a developed trafficking network in one area is a local factor or is it merely a consequence of poor functioning of law enforcement in those areas?
2. Stricter border control measures put a stop to many traffickers' actions of transporting victims. In order to stay in business, they have, to some extent, turned to home turf, recruiting local girls. The existing conditions in the country such as transition, poverty and refugees have also contributed to the emergence of internal trafficking in persons.

On the other hand, a great number of foreign citizens in the period until 2005 and the consequent expansion of internal trafficking only confirm the fact that the market of services provided by the victims of sexual exploitation in the territory of the Republic of Serbia is by no means irrelevant. However, so far little has been done about this issue.

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22 The most difficult task at the start of ASTRA's work was breaking down the prejudice that the victims of trafficking in persons in the Republic of Serbia were only foreign citizens. Unfortunately, the denial of the fact that domestic citizens are victims of trafficking was present mostly among representatives of state institutions.

23 In the period 2002-2005 both among clients of ASTRA SOS Hotline and in shelters there was a considerable number of girls from a town near Belgrade which had been one of the main nodes in the aforementioned transit. This years-long trend had its epilogue in the trial before the Special Department for Organised Crime of the District Court in Belgrade.

3. Until 2005, there had been a number of anti-trafficking campaigns which resulted in a better insight into the problem, both in expert and lay public. This in turn led to more frequent reporting and more success in the identification of domestic victims. Also, many campaigns have been carried out in previously identified source countries, which must have had a general and preventive influence in those countries.
4. Finally, one of the reasons may be that the countries such as Romania and Bulgaria, which at one point served as source countries of identified victims of trafficking (apart from Ukraine and Moldova) have become EU Member States. Upon their entering the EU, the route across Serbia has ceased to be active. In preparing this Manual, we have not found any information which could point to the correlation between the improvement of living standard in these countries and human trafficking. We think that such data would be invaluable when talking about etiology of trafficking in persons.

Trafficking victims by citizenship (March 2002 - June 2009)

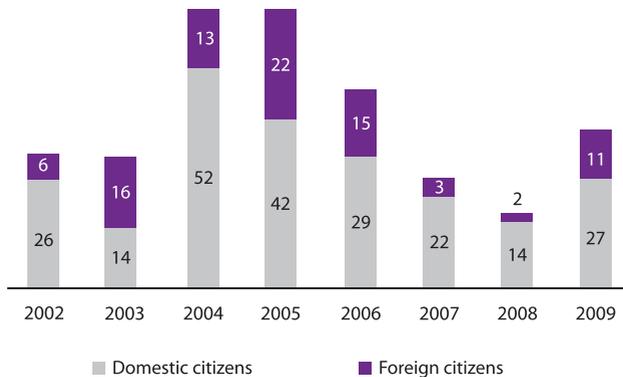


Chart 3

Countries of origin of foreign trafficking victims (2002-2009)

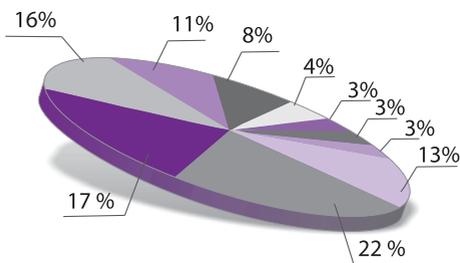


Chart 4



### Type of settlement

The question as to the areas or towns from which victims come is often raised. As it can be seen from chart 5, 60% of identified victims of trafficking come from urban areas, whereas 40% of them come from rural areas. As far as Serbia is concerned, we can say with certainty that there are no areas in which we have not identified victims of sexual exploitation.

Trafficking victims by settlement (March 2002 - June 2009)

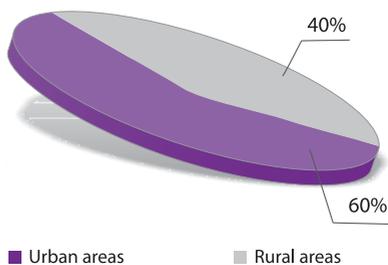


Chart 5

### Previous experience of violence

According to ASTRA SOS Hotline data<sup>24</sup>, more than half citizens of Serbia identified as trafficking victims between 2002 and 2009 had had previous experiences of violence<sup>25</sup> (chart 6). We have every reason to believe that this percentage is even higher considering that this information is missing for one third of our clients.<sup>26</sup>

Previous experiences of violence in human trafficking cases  
(domestic citizens)

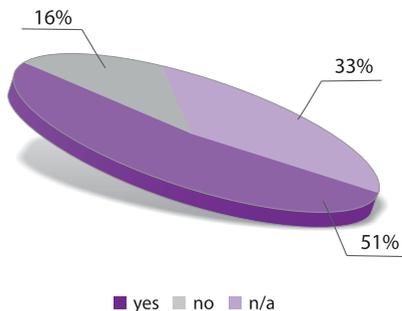


Chart 6

Previous experiences of violence in human trafficking cases  
(foreign citizens)

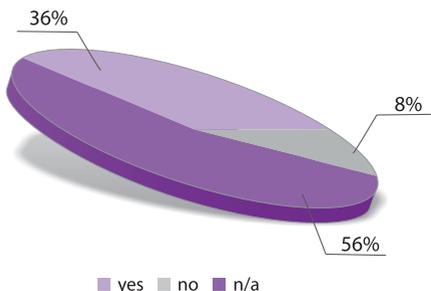


Chart 7

<sup>24</sup> 314 victims of trafficking in persons have been identified through ASTRA SOS Hotline since March 2002 (the beginning of work of the SOS hotline) until December 2009. Quoted data are taken over from ASTRA Database.

<sup>25</sup> The figure refers to both violence within primary family and domestic violence.

<sup>26</sup> One of the rules of work on ASTRA SOS Hotline is that the victims are asked only the information which is of immediate relevance for providing assistance and creating a recovery program, without being burdened with detailed inquiries. Except in urgent cases when a person is exposed to acute violence, search cases etc., information is obtained from conversations with clients over a long periods of time, while topics such as previous experiences of violence are brought up and discussed only on the client's initiative.

Unfortunately, in 56% of cases of foreign citizens who have been identified as victims of trafficking in the same period, we do not have information on possible history of domestic violence (chart 7). However, the fact that out of 44% of cases, in which the background information is available, as many as 36% of them have survived violence within primary family and/or abuse by their partner, illustrates the complexity of the trafficking problem and the essential need to work on all causes. It also points to the consequences of the situations when the cases of family violence are not tackled by the competent services. Moreover, these data further indicate how widespread domestic violence actually is.





## Chapter 2.

### SOS Hotline for (potential) victims of trafficking

#### 2.1. Types of telephone lines for providing assistance, counselling and giving specific information

It is difficult to give an overview of all the terms relating to these telephone lines and the ways in which such terms and their combinations are used.

Moreover, it can be said that confusion exists at the theoretical level, too, since one and the same term does not always mean the same thing – activity, method of work, etc.

Dictionaries contain the following definitions:

- *Free Dictionary*<sup>27</sup> distinguishes a hotline from a helpline: **hot line**: 1. A direct and immediate telephone linkup, especially between heads of government, as for use in a crisis or 2. A telephone line that gives quick and direct access to a source of information or help; and **helpline**: a telephone line set aside for callers to contact an organization for help with a problem,

- *The Merriam-Webster dictionary*<sup>28</sup> defines a hotline as a usually toll-free telephone service available to the public for some specific purpose (as to receive advice or information about a particular subject or to talk confidentially about personal problems to a sympathetic listener).

Barbara Limanowska<sup>29</sup> has identified three main forms of help-lines, each with its own advantages and disadvantages:

- Help-lines organised by government agencies, usually Ministries of the Interior or Departments of Migration. Their goal is to provide information about migration and trafficking;
- Help-lines organised by anti-trafficking organisations that aim principally to reach and/or support victims of trafficking. These lines also provide information about trafficking, migration, disappearances and services for migrants;

<sup>27</sup> <http://www.thefreedictionary.com>

<sup>28</sup> <http://www.merriam-webster.com/medical/hotline>

<sup>29</sup> UNICEF, UNOHCHR, OSCE ODIHR (2005) *Trafficking in Human Beings in South Eastern Europe 2004 – Focus on prevention in Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, The former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Moldova, Romania, Serbia and Montenegro, The UN Administered Province of Kosovo*, p. 32 <http://www.unicef.org/ceecis/Trafficking.Report.2005.pdf>

- Help-lines organised for other purposes (violence against women, child abuse) that also give information about trafficking.

A trafficking-specific help-line might have the disadvantage of not reaching larger risk groups, namely those who do not self-identify as risk categories. Those people could be less willing to call it for preventive/informative purposes as compared to a general informative help-line. Contact would however be more likely in the case of suspected victims of trafficking either by family, friends, clients or the victims themselves.

Kerrie Shandley and Susan Moore, in their 2008 study, where they evaluate gambler's help lines, give only one term, i.e. helpline, listing their main advantages and disadvantages based on reviewing a voluminous literature. The main advantages include low cost, large accessibility, anonymity and confidentiality (for clients). They are also important as an addition to face to face counselling and can be the first step necessary to encourage individuals to take the next step towards conventional therapy. The main disadvantages include lack of visual contact which is helpful during the counselling process, the frequency of indecent and fake calls (which may diminish the sensibility and motivation of the consultant) and the limited possibilities for applying the full scale of therapeutic techniques. Time restrictions of telephone counselling, the possibility that the call or conversation may be an isolated interaction and the difficulties in evaluating this kind of work are also disadvantages.<sup>30</sup>

Numerous reports by organizations engaged in supporting or organizing various service telephone lines equally use two terms - helpline and hotline: reports by USAID<sup>31</sup> and the Danish Red Cross.<sup>32</sup>

The authors of the CHI<sup>33</sup> manual for starting a child helpline distinguish between the hotline and warnline, stating that: "The terms helpline, hotline or warnline are sometimes used interchangeably in different countries. The most commonly used term, hotline, is defined as a telephone line that gives quick and direct access to a source of information or help. CHI's understanding and use of the term child helpline, is a service provided to children or adults contacting on behalf of children through counselling, referral or intervention, via telephone, email, internet chat rooms, free posts or outreach..."

30 Shandley K. and Moore S. (2008) "Evaluation of Gambler's Helpline: A Consumer Perspective", *International Gambling Studies*, 8:3,315 — 330

31 USAID (2008) *Best practices for programming to protect and assist victims of trafficking in Europe and Eurasia. Final report* <http://gender.developmentgateway.org/uploads/media/gender/Protection%20Final%20Exec%20Sum%20121008.pdf>

32 Danish Red Cross (2005) *Manual of Good practices in response to trafficking in human beings*

33 CHI, (2007) *Building your Child Helpline: a user-friendly guide to starting or scaling-up a child helpline*, <http://www.childhelplineinternational.org/assets/cms/File/PDF/child%20helpline%20manuals/032107%20CHI%20-%20starting%20your%20child%20helpline%20manual.pdf>

Over the past twenty years or so, telephone services for providing assistance, counselling and giving information relating to various fields of health care and social services have also developed in our midst, namely the SOS telephone for women and children victims of violence, "Hello" for healthy baby, Telephone appeal of the Institute of Psychiatry, Jazas AIDS-info and SOS discrimination, Roma Children's Centre for Women and Children Victims of Violence, Incest Trauma Centre, Counselling Against Family Violence – are but some of them, taken from the "Politika" daily paper in order to show the diversity of names. As we have stated earlier, the terms used in Anglo-Saxon expert literature include *SOS line*, *helpline*, *hotline*, *counselling line*, *crisis counselling line*.<sup>34</sup> The criteria for defining these telephone services include primarily the theme they are dealing with and the target group of their activity, but also the way they operate – principles they adhere to, length of working hours, profile of volunteers or professionals answering the phone etc. It is not seldom that some of the characteristics are changed during work, e.g. working hours, or that for example some principle is improved while the name remains the same.

Coman and associates (2001)<sup>35</sup> suggest telephone services can be divided into two broad categories, generalist services that target the community as a whole dealing with a range of issues (e.g. Lifeline), and specialist services that either address a particular issue (e.g. Hepatitis C Helpline) or target a specific segment of the community (e.g. the Gay and Lesbian Switchboard). Specialist services are further subdivided into crisis counselling and referral services that usually provide anonymous counselling, often at a point of crisis (e.g. Gambler's Helpline) and continued support services that provide ongoing counselling as required (e.g. Quitline).

According to this division, the hotline for victims of trafficking would fall under specialised services.

ASTRA SOS Hotline is therefore a specialized telephone line for problems in the domain of human trafficking, whereas group and individual therapies are conducted within the Daily Centre.

ASTRA SOS Hotline for victims of human trafficking is a telephone service set up in 2002. It was originally conceived as a preventive-educational info service where citizens could receive information relating to safe migrations, schooling or employment abroad, namely to all potentially risky situations in terms of human trafficking. However, it was very soon afterwards, less than a month later, that we received the first

<sup>34</sup> The term often used in the Netherlands is "Hulplijn", which is the same as "help lin" in the English speaking area. These telephone lines are sometimes called "SOS-hulplijn" or "SOS-hulpdienst" ("hulpdienst" means "help service"). The term "Notruf" is used in Germany. In Austria there are "Sorge telephones" and in France the SOS telephone is also called the Green telephone.

<sup>35</sup> Quoted according to Shandley K. and Moore S. (2008) "Evaluation of Gambler's Helpline: A Consumer Perspective", *International Gambling Studies*, 8:3, 315 — 330

call that was directly related to possible human trafficking victims who were being exploited in an apartment in Belgrade. Since that moment, the component of direct assistance to victims has been added to ASTRA's preventive-educational activity. For that reason, the "info" hotline was soon deleted from the name, and the full name has ever since been ASTRA SOS Hotline. Further development was dictated by the needs of clients, which is why soon afterwards we opened the Daily Centre where the following activities are performed: encouragement for the return to the education system, continuous therapeutic work, self-help groups, planning of free time, yoga and self defence courses, educational workshops (theme is chosen by the clients of the Daily Centre), economic empowerment, etc.

Today the whole program is called ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program.

Via ASTRA SOS Hotline we get in touch with potential victims, learn about persons in the human trafficking chain and establish contacts with them, as well as with persons who came out of it without adequate assistance in the recovery period.

Therefore, via SOS hotline we are working on:

- ▶ **Prevention** – aimed at providing our clients with information on the human trafficking problem, as well as on safe migrations and legal work abroad. Very often, it is thanks to the information obtained in conversations with clients who are inquiring about businesses/organizations offering them work, that we can keep track of the changing trends<sup>36</sup>, i.e. identify new ways and means of recruiting potential human trafficking victims. Assistance moves towards the elimination of possible risks, deception, manipulations and even coercions, which citizens may face when planning to move and/or get a job in another state, since these are the processes in which clients have been most often cheated and/or recruited for in the human trafficking chain.
- ▶ **Identification and provision of direct assistance to human trafficking victims**, which includes conducting interviews with persons reporting to have information that a person may have gone missing in a human trafficking chain<sup>37</sup>, or with persons who have emerged from a situation of violence and who turn to us because they did not receive any assistance until that moment. This group of calls includes

36 In different periods, different agencies were engaged in job brokering abroad, whereas their work was not legally regulated. Employment agencies left the "grey area" in 2004, when it became necessary for them to have a licence, which was at first issued by the Ministry of Labour and Social Policy, but it is now within the competence of the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development. A growing number of tourist agencies have lately become engaged in intermediation in finding employment abroad, primarily for babysitting jobs, the so-called "au pair" jobs/programs in Western Europe countries.

37 Situations where the victim turns to us directly from a violent situation are very rare. Experience has shown that even when they do find themselves in a position to call someone on the phone, without escort or surveillance, it will most often be their parents or some trusted person from their personal life.

those relating to reporting possible information on the locations where victims are being exploited, or other information on human traffickers and other participants/accomplices in the human trafficking chain.

## 2.2. Principles of work on ASTRA SOS Hotline

Principles of work on every SOS hotline are extremely important. When we started working on ASTRA SOS Hotline in 2002, we used the principles that we had been applying for many years in the SOS Hotline and Centre for Girls, supplementing our knowledge from the existing manuals for working with women who survived violence.<sup>38 39 40</sup> Since we acquired previous knowledge working with women and girls, some of which were very young, during the work on ASTRA SOS Hotline we had to get acquainted with specific problems of persons who had suffered the trauma of human trafficking, as well as with men and boy victims. Therefore, with feminist principles as the starting point, we reached what we today consider to be the best practice in working with all victims of human trafficking, as well as with persons reporting a disappearance or suspicious developments in terms of human trafficking in their neighbourhood, premises, etc.<sup>41</sup>

The principle of **accessibility – non-discrimination** means that the hotline is available to all persons regardless of their gender, age, ethnicity, nationality, religious affiliation, sexual orientation, or any other difference.

The principle of **anonymity** implies that persons turning to ASTRA SOS Hotline do not have to leave their personal or other self-related data. As a rule, potential and/or identified victims of human trafficking, their family members, as well as persons turning to us for help relating to checking foreign job offers etc. leave the data necessary for the intervention, with permission to forward the information to external associates or competent services.<sup>42</sup>

The principle of **confidentiality** is reflected in the fact that everything the client says via telephone remains between ASTRA and the client. If the necessary assistance exceeds our competencies, or if it is necessary to include external associates or competent services, an agreement is made with the client on the further flow of the com-

38 *Anti-ratni bilten SOS-a*, SOS telefon za žene i decu žrtve nasilja, Beograd, 8. mart 1993. pp. 82-83.

39 *Žene za život bez nasilja – Priručnik za volonterke na SOS telefonu*, SOS telefon za žene i decu žrtve nasilja u Beogradu, 1995

40 *Priručnik za rad sa ženama sa traumom muškog nasilja, feministički pristup*, Autonomni ženski centar, Beograd, 2008, pp. 50-56.

41 Annex 2 contains WHO ethical and safety recommendations for interviewing trafficked women

42 Citizens reporting their knowledge on human traffickers or clubs in which exploitation occurs, insist on remaining anonymous for fear of traffickers' revenge.

municated information. It is also necessary to assure the caller that the received data will be handled accordingly.

The principle of **trust** means that confidence is placed both in the statement of the potential and/or identified victim or the person reporting the someone's disappearance and in the information received on certain human traffickers and/or places where exploitation takes place. Those data are forwarded to the police, without any prior selection and under a well-established procedure, with the agreement of the person calling the SOS hotline, and are checked by the police service.

**We are always on the victim's side**, trying to understand her/his situation. We do not evaluate her/his experiences. At the moment when a victim is in the trafficking chain, we have to understand all of her/his actions and it is precisely the role of the SOS hotline to help her/him in that situation. Partiality understood in such a manner emphasizes empathy and gives priority to encouraging the person in danger to work on her/his own strength, security and self-confidence.

**Victims of violence are not responsible for the violence that happened to them.** Many persons in the human trafficking chain believe that they are responsible for everything that is happening to them. It is important to make it known to them, when and to the extent possible, that societal circumstances create conditions for such situations and that there is no excuse for the violence committed against them.

**The principle of observing the victim's life holistically**, taking into account the situation of violence, exploitation, special needs, poverty, as well as the family status, education, employment etc, because we believe that without such a holistic approach there can be no successful reintegration.

The relation between the SOS hotline consultant and the caller is based on equality. **The principle of equality** implies the exclusion of any position of power of the person working on the SOS hotline. Experience has shown that some of the consultants cannot imagine that all those horrible things could also happen to them – "it happens to some other women", "I am beyond that"; we believe that such a position indicates absence of sensibility, which disqualifies such a person from work with victims of violence.

**The principle of autonomy** signifies the approach where the callers express their needs and desires. We respect their decisions and follow their pace and capabilities. The same principle applies to children, that is, we respect the child's opinion and her/his right to participation, to the limit of the best interest of the child, to which we are bound by Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

**SOS hotline does not give advice.** Callers can only be given information and that should not be confused with advice.

The principle of **urgency** implies that upon receiving information on potential victims and/or locations, we inform the competent authorities, institutions and organizations as quickly as possible, without delay, with the aim of taking action. Slowness of other organizations and institutions cannot be an excuse for inadequate quickness of our own reaction. We are there to keep reminding them that both the quality of life and even life itself of an individual and the development of the entire service depends on the quickness and quality of their work.

**The principle of caution** is extremely important in the work on ASTRA SOS Hotline, because of both the extreme situations to which victims of human trafficking may be exposed and the possibility that we may receive a call from traffickers searching for a lost victim or a witness in the judicial proceedings.

Consultants who have been working at one of the SOS hotlines long enough know that work in practice can lead to a change of certain principles, that mastering the art of conversation within a certain problem area leads to better results and a more efficient assistance to those turning to us. Over time, as well, persons who have a special talent and a particular commitment to this type of work stand out and it is important to realise this at the group level. On the other hand, it is useful that persons who find it difficult to adhere to the said principles, look for other jobs within the organization, at their own initiative or at the suggestion of their superiors. It is important not to hide behind rigidly applied principles, that is, behind one's own prejudices, and to produce inadequate assistance. Our multi-year experience has shown that professionals are not spared from such reactions, especially if they worked for some time in the system of existing social institutions.

### 2.3. SOS Hotline is a safe place

ASTRA SOS Hotline number can be obtained by dialling 988. Although 988 service provides general information on fixed telephony numbers, as well as the names and addresses of users of certain fixed numbers, the SOS hotline number is the only available data about ASTRA. More precisely, by dialling 988 one cannot obtain the address or the other telephone numbers that ASTRA uses.

Identical measures have been taken concerning the mobile phone number used by ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program. The number is protected, namely it cannot be obtained through information about the users, nor is it possible, if someone already has the number, to obtain the address of the organization in this manner.

Contact has been made with the police at the competent station in the municipality where ASTRA is located. A contact person has been named, to whom we speak directly in case of need for urgent intervention regarding the safety of ASTRA.

Clients do not bring their friends and acquaintances without prior agreement and appointment. They are familiar with the fact that ASTRA's address is not public and that, without prior consultations, this information may not be disclosed to anyone.

The first meetings with persons who contact us never take place on ASTRA's premises. The address is revealed only after it is determined that ASTRA would be engaged preventively or on providing assistance to the (potential) victim.

ASTRA's address is never left at public events and professional meetings. If it is given anyway, it is always indicated that this is confidential information and that it is not for public use.

Summons to ASTRA's clients are not delivered to ASTRA's address. Such summons are received by the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Victims of Human Trafficking.

The entrance to the building, the staircase leading to the apartment, as well as the area outside the apartment where the office is located, are under video surveillance and it is possible at all times to see who enters the building, who rings ASTRA's interphone or the office door.

ASTRA SOS consultants and other persons who work for ASTRA are not allowed to give their personal data or the personal data of other employees, i.e. associates, other than their names. SOS consultants may use pseudonym if they do not want to reveal their real name to the client, but none of us have considered it needed so far.

## 2.4. ASTRA SOS Hotline and cooperation with the media

The topic of human trafficking attracts great media attention. This attention, however, is rather manifested through a sensationalist approach (scooping), both in the reporting itself (by what is emphasised, what is the motive for writing, what kind of language is used) and in the text coverage (photos, titles). Examples of quality research journalism are indeed rare. Organizations engaged in providing direct assistance to victims of human trafficking must have this in mind when planning a public appearance and using the media to raise public awareness.

Very often journalists address organizations that provide assistance, wishing to make direct contact with victims of human trafficking and hear their authentic story. Although in principle we try to avoid the use of term "victim" when speaking of persons who survived some form of violence, including human trafficking, it is necessary when in contact with the media to constantly keep in mind that these are indeed victims. After everything that happened to them, these persons most often had to re-

peat their story too many times – at the police station, before the court, during identification, in contact with assistance providers. With full understanding for the public desire to hear the story “first hand”, we must always bear in mind the interest of the victim, who may experience contact with the media as a repeated victimization.

Often the victims themselves accept to give a media statement. Their motives may vary: from the desire to disclose their own experience in order to prevent someone else from becoming a victim of human trafficking, to the need to please people and in a way “reciprocate” the help and support to the organization assisting them on their way to recovery and reintegration. Before connecting your clients with the press, check their motives. They have to do it for their own sake, not for you. It is also your duty to make your client aware of all the negative consequences which may arise from public appearance.

When the victims decide to speak for the media, it is implied that their image and voice will be altered. However, full unrecognizability is seldom achieved. This means that they will probably not be recognized by passers-by in the street, but there is always a danger that their family, friends and acquaintances might recognize them. Many victims of human trafficking do not want their family or neighbourhood to know what happened to them.

It is necessary that firstly you as the organization providing assistance and the victim trust the journalist who will conduct the interview. Questions are agreed beforehand and the victims have full right to refuse to answer a certain question or to ask for a break during the interview and even give it up completely if they feel unable to continue. You should always be there, by their side, to make sure that the agreement is respected and to be at their disposal in case they need help and support.

Always demand to see the footage/report/article containing the victim’s confession before it is broadcast or published. Both you and the victim have the right to refuse your approval for broadcasting if you are not satisfied or if you believe that the public release of such material would not be in the victim’s interest.

Conduct the interview on a neutral ground, where victims will feel comfortable and which will ensure the confidentiality of their identity. This should under no circumstances be the place where the victims live. It is common practice not to identify the victims by their first and last name but rather by initials, however since not many human trafficking cases reach the media, sometimes even the initials reveal too much, especially if the victims are persons living in smaller towns.

The victims should by no means speak with journalists during the reflection period<sup>43</sup>, or at least immediately upon exiting the human trafficking chain, since because of the trauma they would not yet be able to rightly estimate what would be in their best interest. Negative media effects could likely result in retraumatization.

If your client is a minor, i.e. a child, protection of her/his privacy is a priority. It is your duty to keep such a client away from the media.

Safety of persons working in the organization for providing direct assistance to victims of human trafficking is also an important aspect in contacts with the media. Their identity should remain protected, as well as the location of the shelter or SOS hotline.

Therefore, let us reiterate, as an organization providing assistance to victims of human trafficking, you are obliged to protect both yourself and your clients. Sometimes this means that you will not allow the press direct contact with victims. That is your right and your obligation in terms of acting in the client's best interest and you should always keep this argument in mind, even if it means less media visibility.

SOS hotline consultants must be ready at any given moment to answer to some of the questions journalists most often ask. Some of these are:

- Can you check the agency...?
- Can you check the contract?
- Can you check the destination?
- May I report a missing person to you?
- Do you have a shelter?
- What is the penalty for human trafficking?
- Where can I report domestic violence?
- What foreign NGOs do you cooperate with?
- May I be a volunteer at your organization?
- What is your organization dealing with?
- Can I report a trafficking case anonymously?

Our recommendation is that one person in the organization should be assigned to contact with media; whenever possible, such person should not be directly involved in work with victims.

<sup>43</sup> Reflection period is a very important phase in the process of recovery and reintegration of trafficking victims. This is a period during which (potential) victim is provided with safe accommodation and (temporary) residence permit where needed, relevant information about her/his rights, assistance and support possibilities and when she/he is given time to reflect on her/his situation and options. During this period, victims are not required to cooperate with the police. Source: [http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:ZumtENpluV0J:okruznisudbg.rs/content/2008/trgovinaljudima/attachment/at\\_download+period+refleksije+zrtva&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&client=firefox-a](http://209.85.229.132/search?q=cache:ZumtENpluV0J:okruznisudbg.rs/content/2008/trgovinaljudima/attachment/at_download+period+refleksije+zrtva&cd=1&hl=en&ct=clnk&client=firefox-a)

Crisis Communication Handbook<sup>44</sup> gives some media tips.

Always:

- Take your time
- Think before you answer
- Stay within your field of competence
- Say that you cannot, or are not permitted, to answer a question
- Stick to the facts
- Assume that everything is “on the record”
- Be firm, fair and honest

You should also consider whether you or your organization should in fact be answering the questions. The message may need to be coordinated with other crisis responders.

## 2.5. SOS Hotline management

### 2.5.1. SOS Team

The SOS Team consists of persons of different ages, professions, i.e. future professions (they are often undergraduate students). Since ASTRA is an organization established within and by the members of the women’s movement, up till now its collaborators have been mostly women, although the number of the ASTRA’s male activists and collaborators keeps increasing.

Before they become team members, the candidates go through a specific SOS training<sup>45</sup>, which has a double role: selection and education.

The selection of future members is done at the several levels. Namely, persons interested in joining ASTRA usually contact us via SOS hotline. All these applications are collected and before scheduling the training, all of them are asked to send their CVs and motivational letters. On that basis, the list of candidates that will be invited for interview is made. After the interview, the final list of training participants is made. However, the selection of future consultants does not end here.

<sup>44</sup> Crisis Communications Handbook Summary and translation of the Swedish *Handbok i kriskommunikation*, SEMA’s Educational Series 2008:3, Swedish Emergency Management Agency, 2008

<sup>45</sup> Annex 4 includes the Work Program for the SOS Hotline Consultant Training.

At the end of the training, the instructors evaluate the participants, not only by the level of the gained knowledge and skills, but also by their affinity to work with persons who have suffered violence, and on the basis of their capacity for empathy. Thus, training is a precondition for their successful inclusion and team work, particularly bearing in mind how different their previous experiences are. After training classes, follows a six-month practical training with the support of colleagues with longer work experience. After completed training, the new consultants begin to work on the SOS Hotline. Of course, each candidate may decide to give up the program in any stage of the training.

After the basic SOS Hotline training, the consultants need to keep upgrading their capacity by reading relevant literature, supervision, through additional seminars, training and study visits. Sometimes the very nature of the call imposes the need for further informing and education of the consultant regarding a certain issue (in the medical, legal, psychology or any other field). Moreover, it is essential that the SOS Hotline consultants are acquainted with all activities of the organization within other programmes, in order to have an overall picture of the events in the anti-trafficking movement, to be able to provide more complete answers to the clients' questions.

The current ASTRA SOS Team<sup>46</sup> is young, it consists of seven members of different education. The team has been formed over the last five years. The team members began to work after successfully completed ASTRA SOS training, while two consultants have had a long-term experience in work with the victims of trafficking in human beings in other organizations' programmes, and were trained in ASTRA later.

### 2.5.2. SOS Team meetings

SOS Team<sup>47</sup> is formed gradually and through joint work. One of the preconditions for the implementation of joint and coordinated activities include regular team meetings. In the team meetings, activities performed in the previous week are analyzed and opinions exchanged, opposed and reconciled. Moreover, we are making plans for the future activities. It is an opportunity to express one's stand, to feel as an active team member and to realize the importance of being part of the team. Depending on the needs and scope of work, the meetings may be organized in different time intervals. We have our meetings once a week, which is, according to our experience,

<sup>46</sup> Only the ASTRA SOS Hotline consultants are meant, and not the whole Direct Victim Assistance Program (beside this Program, there are three more programs to be implemented within the organization).

<sup>47</sup> Annex 5 includes the Job Description of the SOS consultants and the hostess in the Daily Centre. It is an integral part of the internal ASTRA Rulebook, which includes beside the Job Description also the SOS Protocol that defines procedures within the SOS Hotline. Extended text of the Protocol is found under Chapter 2.

the most appropriate for the successful and precise following of the current cases, making short-term plans and implementation of all current activities.

There are numerous challenges concerning the meeting preparation, conducting and achieving good results. It is important to recognize and define these issues in order to achieve the maximum efficiency. These issues are primarily: being late to a meeting, too long meetings, unpreparedness of certain members for a concrete meeting, unequal participation of the team members, etc.

Presence at the meetings is obligatory, except in extraordinary situations. We have agreed that being late to a meeting due to personal reasons, including traffic jams, is not justified and that the meeting in such a case won't be held. The person because of whom the meeting is delayed is aware that her colleagues will have to find additional time and resources to come to a new meeting.

Too long meetings are not fruitful and do not contribute to the overall improvement of the work quality with the clients and exhaust the participants. Our long-term experience has proved that an hour is enough to present the problems and the planned ways of their resolving when current cases are in question. It is the responsibility of the consultant who is preparing and conducting the meeting that all agenda issues are discussed in an hour. In exceptional cases, when a problem occurs which needs special attention and more time for consultations, longer meetings are justified and reasonable.

One of the ways to ensure participation and active engagement of each team member is taking turns in conducting and preparing a meeting. The consultant who is preparing a meeting must be acquainted in detail with the old and the latest events concerning all cases to be discussed in a meeting, and this is the obligation of all other team members as well. Unpreparedness of the members for a concrete meeting prolongs the meeting because they have to be updated, which causes unequal participation of the team members and unequal contribution to resolving of current issues, which lessens the possibility to find the best possible solutions and undermines the team spirit, because it blocks joint work.

There are certain situations when mutual understanding of the team members and their coordinated actions are particularly important. Work on the ASTRA SOS Hotline as well as direct work with the victims of trafficking in human beings sometimes exposes the staff to great security risks: appearing in courtrooms, performing field actions with the clients, etc. Unfortunately, there are situations when traffickers get the information about the office address or contact personally the SOS Hotline staff, introducing themselves under their real or false names – as family members, as persons of confidence or persons close to the victim, or through their lawyers, or they come directly to the office.

Two of the SOS Hotline consultants had a pretty dangerous experience while accompanying one of the clients to the shelter. The trafficker followed in his private car and then in a taxi the car where the victim and her child were found. His goal was to find out where the victim was going to be so he could kidnap the child, as he had threatened the victim several times in the past. The consultants had to decide quickly what to do at the same time not endangering their clients nor the secret location of the shelter for the trafficking victim. They decided to change their destination and told the taxi driver to take them right to the first police station.

This aspect of our work may jeopardize primarily the victim and the persons close to her/him, and then our team members, which requires strict rules for effective teamwork. This is the reason why consultations and making decisions in the team meetings are crucial. It means that all team members must strictly observe the agreed. It is much easier to write it down than enforce it, particularly in the everyday conditions of our work on several fronts. Joint analysis of omissions or changed conditions in the field due to certain circumstances, after a well planned action, always contributes to greater vigilance in the actions to follow. It is self-explanatory that longer team work brings better collaboration. Certain inclinations and work methods of individual team members should be respected: each person is better in certain actions, which does not mean that the persons who do not like quick actions or show more anxiety while facing a violent situation are not better in making analysis, working in peace, etc. It is important that the coordinator and even the whole team are conscious of such personal predilections, to respect and use them, because the satisfaction with work well done increases the team cohesion and brings to each team member job satisfaction, which is of utmost importance when such activities are in question.

For the more complete and quality assistance to its users, a well developed SOS Hotline must have a wide network of collaborators: professionals in different fields, NGOs and international organizations, both in the field of prevention of human trafficking and in other fields. These contacts are being developed and cherished on a constant and long-term basis. Professionalization of the SOS Hotline requires that among consultants there is at least one lawyer, social worker and psychologist. Moreover, specialization of the consultants or sub teams for work with special categories of people is necessary (such as work with children). Establishing teams of external collaborators, first of all a lawyer team and a psychologist/therapist team is important, and if it is achievable with the best possible geographical coverage, including collaborators of both genders, different nationalities and knowledge of several languages. It is necessary that these collaborators - beside their expert knowledge - are acquainted with the topics of trafficking in human beings, human rights, trends and possible forms of collaboration through additional training. It is not easy though, bearing in mind unavailable professions, particularly in certain towns. Moreover, in selection of collaborators certain dose of precaution is necessary bearing in mind that trafficking in human beings is one of the forms of organized crime.

### ***2.5.3. Duties of the SOS Hotline Coordinator***

Duties of the Coordinator are numerous and different. The scope of her work is to enable harmonious functioning of parts (members of the SOS Team) for effective results (successful work with the clients). She is also a link between the team she manages and other ASTRA members, particularly coordinators of other ASTRA programs.

If any activity of the coordinator could be singled out as the most important, then it is most certainly distribution of tasks within the SOS Team. The Coordinator must recognize the strengths and weaknesses of her collaborators and use them in the best possible way through delegation of duties. She empowers and encourages the team members to undertake responsibility for their actions in situations which require a professional engagement and making important decisions. Thus, she must know at any moment which consultant is the best for an assignment on the basis of her knowledge, ability and willingness to undertake responsibility in a situation in which, for instance, a solution has not been predefined. In the SOS Hotline work each situation is different and each person who calls ASTRA SOS Hotline perceives her problems in another way, which most frequently requires an individual approach while observing a standard protocol. The duty of the Coordinator is to guide the team members and help them to recognize their clients' needs, which they are frequently not able to define, and the team members should respond adequately to such information in their manner of behaving with the client and working with her/him.

It is the duty of the Coordinator to encourage constantly the SOS team members to professional training. It means monitoring the level of inclusion of all members in available educational contents – seminars, lectures and similar. Moreover, it is essential that all consultants are equally included in such activities in compliance with their individual interests and capacities.

Initiative for supervision is necessary to process the frustrating situations in order to lessen the tensions, prevent burnout and explain in a professional manner specific relationships; such initiatives may originate from any team member, although the role of the Coordinator is essential even in such situations.

### ***2.5.4. Some technical prerequisites for working in the SOS Hotline and preparing duty periods***

The SOS hotline consultants are expected to be completely ready at any moment to respond to any work-related requirements. Before the beginning of any SOS hotline shift, the consultant must perform **certain preparations** to ensure a correct response in a given situation. When there are more SOS hotline shifts, each consultant must be **completely acquainted with all the cases** and the clients who have contacted the organization through the SOS hotline, during her shift and in other shifts. This is why

it is important that the consultant **comes earlier** to work in her shift (at least 30 minutes), in order to acquaint herself before the beginning of her shift with all the events from the day before and in order to be completely focused on the coming calls.

It is important that the consultant is technically prepared for work on the SOS hotline. She must always have a pencil and a paper beside her to note down all the details of conversation, she should always have at hand and available important and frequently used phone numbers.

It is necessary that the consultant is acquainted with every case and details of calls, because it is the only way to enable adequate response to the clients who are not calling for the first time, i.e. when the consultant knows what is going on and the course of conversations and interventions possibly undertaken or planned up to that time, she may continue with their implementation. In the event of certain dilemmas or unclear issues, they must be **cleared before the beginning of the shift**. Preparation of a duty period of a consultant depends very much on the activities of the other SOS hotline consultants, i.e. their accurateness, (un)fulfilled obligations, regular entering of calls into the specified forms, etc.

Since the reasons for calling the SOS hotline may be various, the **consultant must have a lot of information available** so she could respond to the needs of the caller. Thus, it is necessary to **actively follow** all issues relevant for the SOS hotline calls (safe migrations, work of the institutions that contribute to prevention of trafficking in human beings and activities of these institutions, legal regulations and their amendments, etc.) and **seek information** that may be relevant for the task she is to perform. One should bear in mind that some clients have already contacted other SOS hotlines or institutions in order to get certain information. It is incorrect to forward such calls to other organizations if information not related to trafficking is in question, and the data could be provided in no time. That is why it is useful to have important telephone numbers at hand, phone numbers of other SOS hotlines, NGOs, institutions, both home and abroad. These lists must be updated as well as databases of other useful information, in order to provide to the clients accurate information. It is useful to have an Internet connection beside the phone because certain valuable information could be provided quickly, without forwarding and delay.<sup>48</sup> The consultant must have a notebook beside the phone to take notes on the conversation.

Every call received through the SOS hotline, e-mail or any message left on the phone machine **must be answered as soon as possible**. It is desirable that the consultant does as much as she can for the clients during her shift with whom she has made contact and to forward all available information. Without a justified reason tasks must

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<sup>48</sup> If we do not have the information which our client needs, it is quite legitimate to say so and ask her/him to call later or to leave her/his phone number so that we could call them back when we find the required information.

not be left for the next shift or the consultant in the next shift. All calls found on the answering machine are recorded into the database.

In order to perform successfully all mentioned activities, the SOS hotline consultant must be psychically prepared for the beginning of the shift. It means that she must be completely **cool-headed, concentrated and focused**.

Private problems should be left behind before the beginning of the shift, and they should not affect the quality of work and services provided for the clients.

Ensuring favourable working conditions for the SOS Hotline is of utmost importance, particularly bearing in mind a sufficient number of consultants, adequate premises and technical equipment. In order to focus on the call, it is essential that the premises where the SOS Hotline is found is not a pass-through and a noisy room, and that there are no other telephones which would disturb by their ringing the conversation with the client. During the conversation it is desirable to switch off all mobile phones and other electronic devices in the immediate vicinity, which could disturb with their sounds the conversation. Equipment, computer and microphones must be working properly. Certain organizations have a telephone exchange with more lines, from which the operator forwards the calls to the consultants on duty. Advantage of such a telephone exchange is that the telephone line is always available to the clients. ASTRA uses only one telephone line and our consultants answer directly to clients without the operator's mediation. We believe that this helps the client to feel that her/his call is strictly private and confidential. With the aim of educating new consultants, certain organizations use speakerphones during the conversation. We believe that such telephone communication should be avoided, since it is less personal and could be misinterpreted by the client.

If it is possible, SOS hotline number should be easy to remember. Moreover, it is important to ensure toll-free number. The lobbying of relevant institutions in the country and raising their awareness of necessity to ensure technical conditions for work of the SOS hotline may be of great help.

### 2.5.5. Keeping records

Keeping accurate records of calls, entering and recording all delivered documents, sent and received letters and similar is of utmost importance in the work of the SOS hotline. The method of recording the calls depends on the staff organization practices and the work demands.

Of course, when we use the word *call*, one should have in mind that it is much more than a simple phone contact. A *call* is any form of communication, verbal or written,

direct, in the form of personal contact with the client in the office or in the field, or indirect, through the telephone, SMS, internet, mail, any contact made by the client or some other person.

The simplest way to record calls is to form a special folder in written or electronic form for each client and user of the organization's services, with the call chronology and recorded contacts with all clients, but also all other persons and institutions in connection with this client. Thus, the staff, but also any other interested person, may follow the chronology of the case. This at the same time facilitates follow-up of the effects of the work with clients, achieved results, problems and missed chances.

The calls are primarily categorized by clients, but at the same time it is necessary to keep chronological records of all received calls, which gives a clear insight into the number of calls made during a certain time period. This means that for each call received on the SOS hotline the following records are kept: who made the call or in whose name (name of the client), date and time when the call was received or made, but also a unique number. Besides being recorded in the electronic form in the client's folder, the calls are recorded in a special calls notebook, where the calls are organized chronologically, by date and time when they were received.

The form in the calls notebook<sup>49</sup> to be filled in is designed in such a way that all essential information are found on its front page, while on the back is a detailed description of the conversation. On the front page, beside the date and time when the call was made, all available data on the client are recorded: name, address, contact telephone number as well as basic information on the caller if she/he is not the client personally: name, contact telephone number, relationship with the (potential) victim.

Moreover, on the front page, the reason of the call (category) and measures undertaken, i.e. interventions implemented in the concrete case, are recorded. It is being noted to which institutions/organization the client turned to before and to whom is the client referred to for further assistance.

Since every call is specific, there is a special section for entering comments/notes of the SOS consultants.

Such pattern in the calls notebook substantially facilitates entering of the data in the electronic form. The form is designed to enable quick and simple gathering and use of data and it has been modified lately to fulfil this purpose in the best possible way.

Work on the SOS hotline requires constant contact with other organizations and institutions, including written communication. As we have already noted, every docu-

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<sup>49</sup> For call record form, please see Annex 6

ment delivered to the SOS address is recorded according to the agreed procedure. When sending and recording received documents (reports, invoices, letters and replies of the institutions and collaborators, etc.), their number from the calls notebook as well as a unique number from the record book. Thus, each document has two numbers, one to associate it with the calls notebook and the other to associate it with the record book are used for designation, in which all received or sent post mail and letters are recorded. A simple insight into a record notebook enables easy tracking of incoming and outgoing mail.

Although all data are kept as separate calls (calls notebook) or by clients (folders), only in the database they are united and stored in one place. Database is a software specially designed to enable entering, quick use and crossing of different data. Thus, data are easily overviewed and access to data is much easier. All calls as well as additional information are entered into a database and easy search enables simple access. Data from the database should remain strictly confidential, because access to data is enabled only to persons who know the user name and password, while the computer where the database is found, is not connected to the Internet nor can it be accessed from other computers through the network. Thus, client data is protected, while at the same time determining of trends for planning of the future activities is enabled.

Since keeping records is an important segment of work on SOS hotline, on the pages to come you can read the article of our colleague Victoria Dochitcu from La Strada Moldova, who is describing how this is done in her organization.

#### *2.5.5. 1. Procedure of incoming calls recording in La Strada Moldova Hotline*

Incoming calls' recording becomes necessary due to the fact that many counsellors operate a Hotline service; this allows each of them to be aware of the problem experienced by the caller and to be guided in case of repeated calls initially counselled by another colleague.

La Strada Hotline team initially use to enter the calls into a Call Registration Log. On daily bases the counsellors enter all the incoming calls in the Call Registration Log by attributing to each appeal a *number of registration* which allows to find out promptly the number of calls counselled in general or on monthly basis, coming back to such whenever necessary for monitoring or quantification of a problem as well as for learning/finding out about the problem of a caller, especially in case of calls from victims soliciting assistance. The Hotline operators also register the *time of counselling* – this indicator (date, hour) allows to carry out dynamics of calls received as well as its specifics depending on day, hour, month, season, time of the year. Registering the *source of learning* about the Hotline means a lot for the assessment of the efficiency of means used to promote such and for concluding on what sources of information are most frequently used by the beneficiaries.

In case of receiving SOS calls (related to facilitation of assistance to a victim) – it is also necessary to ascribe a code to such (case number). In case of receiving repeated SOS appeal the counsellors enter in a separate column from Call Log - *case number* of registration of the first appeal, so as to see how the case has evolved while for the prevention calls it is sufficient to enter the word “repeated”.

The *spoken language* of the caller should be entered in order to assess the need for promotional materials in some or the other language. *Gender, age* and *location* from which the advise-seeker is calling should be registered in order to have a better knowledge of caller’s profile and to assess the efficiency of promotional activities and services furnished.

Most comprehensively described and entered in the log should be the problem stated by the caller so as to allow other counsellors to get familiar with it in detail and in case of repeated appeal to resume the counselling from the spot at which it was discontinued or to furnish counselling in the context of the first appeal. *Recommendations/advices* furnished by the counsellor are entered in the last column, near counsellor’s *nickname*.

Calls Registration Log serves as an instrument of entering data, ensuring storage of information in case of losing such in electronic format. Meanwhile, looking for an appeal registered some time ago could be cumbersome as it required time while going through pages of Calls Registration Log. With the scope of simplifying access to prior entered data was created electronic data support titled *Electronic Data Storage Base*. Indeed, keeping record of data is also important for making qualitative and quantitative analysis of information, materialized in reports, informative materials, topical publications and promotion actions. However, the form and number of databases remain at the discretion of each organization. The International Centre La Strada’s Hotline Database includes the following information: about the each appeal (date/time/number etc), general data about the caller (age, gender, language spoken etc), and information on the stated problem (related to migration process – leaving abroad to work, to study, to get married, in tourism having some offer or not, or problems related to migrant status abroad, etc., or information about the SOS calls – data about the process of recruitment, transportation, exploitation and in general about the circumstances of what happened to presumed victim of trafficking as to make possible to facilitate the access to the adequate assistance).

Each La Strada counsellor has the responsibility for entering information in Database of incoming calls and on counselling furnished on such.

### **2.5.6. SOS hotline working hours**

Ideal working hours for an SOS hotline are arranged round-the-clock: 24 hours, seven days a week. Unfortunately, there are seldom enough resources to achieve it. On the

following pages we have presented ASTRA's experience regarding working hours. Furthermore, there is also an article of our colleagues from the Incest Trauma Center from Belgrade, according to our present knowledge the only non-governmental organization in Serbia which runs a round-the-clock crisis telephone service. In the articles of the authors from the Open Gate - La Strada, Macedonia<sup>50</sup>, La Strada, Moldova<sup>51</sup>, as well as La Strada International, you may find and read about their experiences in organizing the SOS telephone, and, inter alia, on the SOS telephone service working hours.

For determining working hours of the SOS hotline, the number of received calls during different hours of the day on a daily basis is essential. Namely, the number of calls received through the SOS Hotline varies during the day.

ASTRA SOS Hotline's working hours at the very beginning were from 2 pm-8 pm every working day, but later, bearing in mind all the above mentioned data, working hours were changed and prolonged, and today working hours of the SOS Hotline are from 9 am-6 pm

Mobile phone number has been in use since 2006, and this number is the same as the fixed telephone line: **(+381 65) 33 47 817**. Thus, the SOS Hotline is available to the victims and citizens 24h/7.

The experience of ASTRA SOS Hotline has shown that the greatest number of calls are received in the morning. Namely, in that period contact with the representatives of the institutions is most frequently made, since working hours of many of these services important for providing assistance is from 9am-3pm. Some of these institutions are engaged in the field (e.g. social workers), which is the reason why they are contacted usually even earlier in the morning.

On the other hand, calls made by clients are relatively evenly distributed during the day. Daily statistics of the number of calls show that the calls are substantially less frequent after 6 pm.

Beside the fixed SOS number **(+381 11) 33 47 817**, since 2007 a toll-free telephone number **0800 101 201** for the clients in the territory of the Republic of Serbia has been provided.<sup>52</sup>

Since actions in the field are regular, an ASTRA mobile phone to be used in field actions is necessary. Moreover, it is not always possible to work with victims of traffick-

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50 Page 121

51 Page 109

52 Toll-free telephone lines were not available before 2007 in the Telekom Serbia offer.

ing in human beings during working hours. There are numerous extraordinary situations that are impossible to predict and which require urgent intervention.

In order to make the SOS consultants available for urgent cases and to provide a communication means during field actions and all other SOS hotline activities performed outside the office and outside the official working hours, the above mentioned mobile phone is used.



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### 2.5.6.1. 24-Hours Hotline Service against Sexual Violence - Recommendations based on practical experience of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade

Authors: Dr. Ljiljana Bogavac and Dušica Popadić  
 (Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade)

#### **Introduction**

Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade is a women's NGO that provides specialized services for addressing sexual violence issues; officially registered in 1994, Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade is the oldest such institution in the Republic of Serbia. Since then its professional staff has been providing psychological assistance for an average number of 9 reported cases of sexual violence per week. *Except police and its operational scope, so far there has been no other service in the country with round-the-clock working hours, from midnight 0:00-24:00, at least in a certain period, which has readily responded to reported cases of sexual violence.* Psychological assistance to a child and/or adult, who has suffered sexual violence, has been provided by our team primarily through personal contact; our team consists of women of different professions in the (mental) health field. Assistance has also been provided to persons invited by the identified client as persons recognized to be or expected to be an ally, i.e. support. Activities of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade, since its founding in 1994, have been supervised by Dutch professional support. Aspects of everyday assistance are as follows: A) primarily personal contacts through individual sessions and self-help or support groups, and B) crisis hotline service (round-the-clock, 0:00-24:00, in the period November 2004 – September 2006; otherwise, since 1994, services have been available 4 to 8 hours a day from Monday to Friday). Team of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade provides team professional opinion for criminal procedures – at request of courts and other public institutions – and our Deputy Director, who leads our Team for counseling children and women survivors of sexual violence, appears in court to represent professional opinion of the Team as an expert witness. Except on the courts explicit request, the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade participates in civil procedures.

Bearing in mind social circumstances, identity of the Crisis Center (Center for Crisis Intervention) has been determined as primary since its establishment and within this framework the identity of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade as the Training Center has grown. It has been proved to be essential to transfer knowledge and daily prac-

tice related to the topic of sexual violence to all social actors that are responsible to act in the interest of a child or woman exposed to violence. Thus, in almost 16 years of our service, 5,828 employees from 431 institutions/organizations have completed specialists' training of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade, basic or advance, adapted to profiles included by training. Basic level means minimum 14 and maximum 42 effective working hours. Advance level of specialists' training related to different topics means 14 or 21 effective working hours. Certificates of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade, as confirmation of professional improvement may be found in the personal files of the employees in the Republic Ministry of Interior (from uniformed police and inspectors of departments specialized in sexual offences and delinquency of minors, to teachers in police officer schooling), professional personnel in penitentiary or correctional facilities for women and minors-perpetrators of criminal offences, etc.

Strategic focus of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade for the period 2009–2013 is the sexual violence prevention. Basic aim of our service is proper comprehension of sexual trauma by citizens, and thus respect for children and adults who have history of sexual violence. Part of the future prevention activities is most certainly further growth of the Training Center, while, when identity of the Crisis Center is in question, we reserve the right, at our sole discretion, to admission of a certain number of survivors of sexual violence with the purpose of providing psychological assistance.

It is to be expected, like in countries governed by the rule of law, where in compliance with the basic responsibility of the state it is normal that the local institutions of social and health care establish in time functional crisis hotline services against violence working round-the-clock – that such services will be established in our country as well (thus, it will not be necessary for non-governmental organizations to provide services for which civil servants are already being paid for). To this aim, the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade, with this article, transfers the description of the part of its long-term experience to future services that will work within the state in the best interest of the child and adult survivors. Preparatory phase in establishing a crisis telephone service is particularly emphasized.

### ***Recommendations for establishing, functioning and professional growth of a 24-hour crisis hotline for cases of gender-based violence***

The motive for establishing a 24-hour crisis hotline service against sexual violence, started up in the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade on November 19, 2004, on the World Day for Prevention of Child Abuse, was, in our opinion, the fact that in each metropolis a round-the-clock service of such type is highly necessary. As opposed to metropolises in regulated countries with long tradition of respect for human rights and women exposed to violence, City of Belgrade and Republic of Serbia, so far, have not been able to carry such responsibility. Particularly in the period from 2004 till today. And particularly when the service against sexual violence is in question! In

particular, 5 years ago! Because, in Serbia, certain improvement in the system for protection of women and children exposed to emotional and physical violence in family has been noticed; however, sexual abuse as a topic still does not get enough attention nor are necessary funds provided for victim assistance.

It is important to know that round-the-clock availability and correct intervention incite growth of the number of reported cases and we must be prepared for it. We would like to point out that from opening of the round-the-clock crisis telephone service till today, a 29 per cent growth of reported cases has been recorded. One cannot say that sexual violence cases occur more often than before, this only proves that when there are services which have earned the confidence of citizens – all citizens who happen to find themselves in abuse situation stop treating these crimes as a taboo subject and start reporting them. We made the social problem of sexual violence more visible and nearly two years later, when we returned to the 8-hour work day, we started a campaign in the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade, “The Me Nobody Knows”, and the number of reported cases has remained the same.

### **Some recommendations on what must be done before the opening of the Crisis Hotline Service:**

- **In-depth** training of professional staff to work in the Round-the-Clock Crisis Hotline Service:
- a) Selection of **team members of proven quality known for their sincere approach in direct service provision to people**; considerably high salaries for team members from permanent, guaranteed funds; sufficient number of team members should be provided (for round-the-clock service minimum 14); team members should be trained for providing specific assistance; active cooperation with previously developed ally services that help in fight against violence over children and women; mandatory supervision to rely on. If these conditions are not fulfilled, it is recommended not to start the crisis hotline service at all. To work under conditions that do not fulfill the mentioned criteria causes continuing frustration, because it is impossible to meet the requirements of the job, which causes ever more inadequate assistance, hiding of mistakes, self-isolation of helpers who bring their clients also into it.
  - b) The training process is **primarily a process of reviewing personal attitudes** toward violence and women, it is a process of understanding the child’s position as well as system of oppression and discrimination tools. Only the next step includes acquiring of necessary knowledge and skills in the context of violence against children and women, and this, the most concretely educative part – is the easiest to upgrade. The third component of the training process relates to testing of the previous culture of communication as well as former culture and habits in coop-

eration. This segment in the practice of helpers frequently obstructs establishing trust relationship with the client, but also healthy team relations.

- c) **Training by practitioners** (employed in government and non-government services that have experience of direct long-term work with child and adult survivors). This is also the last opportunity of critical thinking whether the helpers of the future crisis hotline service feel at ease in their position. The inner process includes a definitive decision which marks personal understanding that it is about work where adequate attitude toward violence – in the interest of the survivor – changes the former way of life of the helpers who have decided to engage themselves in this field.
  - d) The training, inter alia, accurately points out that working in a crisis hotline service is a specific type of job and **demands special training**, that a valuable, in-depth service for the client is in question, it is more than just “listening and referring for further help” (there is a frequent risk involved when possibilities of the crisis hotline service are inaccurately comprehended and employees act more like ‘operators’, who merely ‘transfer cases’ to other services included by the overall protection system, and not like diligent helpers who exhaust all possibilities of their own repertoire till the end. It is important to learn that this job requires the knowledge of recognizing, assessing and implementing priorities opposite to support the victim of violence in terms of social profiling or out of charity (for example, to learn to select clients with a corresponding level of existential threat that needs to be assisted by in-take at the shelter). It is equally important to understand that the shelter is not the solution of domestic violence situation but e.g. through implementation of the Family Law measures such as Protection From Abuse order (PFA), and eviction of the offender from the house regardless of the right of property or lease of immovable. There are many critical points which test the in-depth understanding of the context of the gender-based violence, and the mentioned may be overcome by training, but also long-term work experience through which the system dynamics is being learned and understood.
- **Establishing of a clear organizational structure of the crisis service:**
- a) **Procedures, Protocols:** To learn to abide by the Protocols adopted by related ministries and implement them daily (read: Consistent implementation of the Protocol represents also the helper’s attitude toward the violence. To learn precisely one’s own place in the system of support to the client; bringing internal procedures characteristic and mandatory for services against violence regarding the regular procedure in the case of abuse of the helper-client relationship (such an example is the Child Protection Policy of the Save the Children, UK). To lead an active policy as follows: 1. Implementing the mandatory reporting of criminal offences related to gender-based violence (instead of no taking action

at all, irresponsible keeping “bad” secret of ongoing abuse or hiding behind the confidentiality rule when ongoing crime is in question); 2. Consistent reporting of the abuse by helpers in institutions (for example, abuse of position by the personnel in institutions as permanent living settings for women with disability, cases of abuse of children without parental care, etc.) as well as reporting of domestic violence; 3. Active implementation of the Family Law provision (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Serbia”, No. 18/059”), **Failure to Report Criminal Offence or Offender (Article 332)**, which specifies sanctions for helpers who fail to report a criminal offence.

- b) Providing **supervision to rely on** as professional support to personnel working in the crisis hotline service (the same note as for the trainers: it is necessary that consulting, advising and/or supervision tasks are **performed by practitioners**. For instance, professional staff of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade performed these tasks in the former period under the Contract with the state shelter for abused children within the Center for children without parental care “Jovan Jovanović – Zmaj” and it is officially called: Department for urgent protection of abused children.
- Call to the Crisis Service **for citizens is free of charge** (for example, line 0800 and similar).
  - Providing a **rich directory / database of experienced associate institutions and organizations**, in which practitioners, with their first and last names, publicly, in the long term, distinguish themselves by positive assistance which they have provided in fighting violence against children and women (a good example is Network of Trust to Fight Gender-Based Violence, which is an intervention team of practitioners from 15 GOs and NGOs, which was founded by the ITC in 2001, and we have been coordinating it to this day). The term “experienced associate institutions and organizations” in this context means that quality of services is confirmed by the clients’ feedback.
  - Developing a **clear and precise strategy** of communication and public relations strategy.
  - **Announcing the opening** of a crisis hotline service. **Continuous public informing on the work, results and needs of the Crisis Hotline Service.**

### *Conclusion*

Experience of the Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade shows that preparatory phase of organizing a 24-hour crisis hotline service is of utmost importance. Preparations for work in the terms of defining the policy, organizational structure, teamwork rules as well as long-term professional and financial support at each level – determines the service quality and sustainability. The basic responsibility of public institutions is to

make such services in their competence highly functional and answer their demanding complex nature and responsibilities they include. To this aim, for obtaining quality service of this type, Incest Trauma Center – Belgrade is ready to contribute.

## 2.6. Handling SOS hotline calls

### 2.6.1. Stages of an SOS call

A SOS telephone conversation could be divided into four stages:

1. Starting a conversation in order to establish confidence
2. Clearing and defining the situation
3. Exploring alternatives
4. Concluding and ending the conversation

#### 1. Starting a conversation in order to establish confidence

The beginning of any telephone conversation is of utmost importance. Initial contact is a basis for continuation of the conversation; thus, the way the first verbal contact with the client is made may be crucial. The client must be encouraged and must be given enough reasons to trust the consultant she/he talks to. Beside a friendly attitude, the client must be assured that the consultant wants to help her/him. Since the telephone conversation includes only a verbal component, the consultant's voice is essential, i.e. beside the things she/he says, the way she/he says them is relevant too.

SOS hotline is frequently misused or the call may be used to make insensitive jokes. It is essential to keep calm during such calls, preserve patience and take such calls seriously. One should have in mind that there is always a possibility that the caller simply "tests" the SOS hotline staff and tries to overcome the awkwardness of the "first call".

Moreover, the consultant may expect silence on the other end of the line, i.e. the caller simply keeps quite. Like in the first case, the consultant must not hang up the phone abruptly, but she/he should encourage the client to start the conversation. Namely, one must have in mind that the person who keeps quiet may have never talked about her/his problem before and that she/he needs time to start to talk about it. This is the reason why certain clients cannot even start the conversation even with a topic less "painful" from the real reason of the call.

When we speak about trafficking in human beings, one should never forget that the caller may be someone who does not speak or barely speaks the language of the country (or region) where the specific SOS Hotline is found.

Some clients are not “skilled” enough in using the phone, while the others surpass more easily the obstacle of the first contact with SOS hotline.

In this stage the consultant collects information on the type of the call: if it is a prevention and educational call; if it is a report of a missing person suspected to disappear in the human trafficking chain; or if it is a call providing information on a certain club or trafficker.

## 2. Clearing and defining the situation

After the consultant has assessed the call, i.e. she/he has found out, for example, that a report of a missing person or checking the job advertisements are in question, the conversation enters the stage where the caller must explain her/his situation in more detail. The caller must be additionally encouraged to do so by using the consultant’s communication skills, such as reflection and empathy. The client should be helped to explain her/his problem the best she/he can.

Sometimes, the problem is a very complex one (for instance, the trafficking victim managed to escape from the club, she is very scared, she returned to the environment where she previously lived and her father is physically and psychically abusive): in such a case the problem must be analyzed and decomposed into several smaller problems, thus making the options for resolving the problem a little easier (in the given example: - security issue and fear of traffickers, on the one hand, - domestic violence, on the other hand). It is possible that the caller speaks out on different problems (the above mentioned caller, beside the security issue and violence in the primary family, wants to regain custody of her child). In such cases it is necessary to make a priority list with the client.

Furthermore, it is of utmost importance to understand the feelings of the client and how she/he feels about the problem, which may help the consultant to understand the way the client perceives the situation. The task of the consultant is to lead the caller through this process and guide her/him; at the same time, the consultant should be vigilant and monitor the client’s reactions and not insist on going deeper than the client is ready at that moment. Namely, this conversation is not and should not be a therapy.

The client could present her/his problem in a pretty mixed-up way. Thus, in this stage it is necessary to resolve all unclaritys, i.e. the consultant should ask additional questions to explain the situation better and make obvious to the client that she/he listens attentively to the client’s story.

While examining the situation and defining problems one should ask well focused and open-ended questions, i.e. avoid questions that could be answered with simple yes/no short answers, as well as suggestive questions.

### **3. Exploring alternatives for resolving the problem and development of an action plan**

Once the problem has been identified, i.e. when the SOS hotline caller and the consultant feel that the situation has been cleared and the feelings explored in the above mentioned way, different possibilities for resolving the problem may be considered.

In this stage the goals should be defined. It is important to determine what is the SOS hotline caller expectancy for solution of a problem, i.e. what is the solution of the problem for her/him. It is important to discuss different possibilities and outcomes, even the ones which at first seem undesirable. All possibilities should be considered, in the widest range, from the most desirable to the least desirable way out. The consultant must not judge the person she/he talks to, nor moralize or impose the consultant's solution according to their own opinion; each consultant should equally present all solutions to the problem. Equally well presented possibilities can help the client in making a decision which meets the best the needs, wishes and expectations of the client, as well as decisions which she/he is capable to make at a given moment.

The goals may relate to what the client and the consultant might expect from each other, and what the client might gain from the conversation.

As far as the client is concerned, the goal must be important and have sense; it is essential that fulfilling of the goal means exerting certain efforts and must lead to the problem solution. The greater the problem the more sub goals should be defined, and all of them should be concrete and feasible. It is important to highlight that there is no ideal solution to a problem and that the goals should be reached step by step.

While defining stages of an action and selection of possibilities, i.e. creating an action plan, it is important to list with the client all potential problems that may occur in the goal fulfilment process. Furthermore, all factors should be listed that may help the client in the goal fulfilment. Thus, the client gets a chance to empower herself/himself and to find in her/his environment support, i.e. persons or institutions and organizations which could give her/him support in the goal fulfilment. If a person is acquainted with all the problems which could be an obstacle for the goal fulfilment, if she/he regains sense of power, the problems can be resolved a lot easier later on, when they appear. It could help the client not to give up her/his goal and to accept a concrete problem only as a temporary obstacle.

As far as the time schedule is concerned, it is necessary to define the time-limits and agree with the client to call again SOS hotline when she/he accomplishes some of the

agreed items. Besides monitoring the implementation of the plan, these conversations may be essential for additional motivation of the clients. Of course, one should not insist on another SOS Hotline call by the client, and impose this obligation as binding to the client. It is important to talk about what can be done if the plan is not implemented the way it has been determined, supporting the clients to continue or revise their plan.

If the client is not able to make a decision concerning the action plan and the problem, she/he must be informed that she/he may call when she/he thinks about it a little more and when she/he is more ready for making a final decision.

At the end of the conversation, the action plan should be repeated and all dilemmas, unclaritys and possible confusion cleared till the plan is completely clear both to the client and consultant. Furthermore, it is necessary to check whether a certain field has been omitted or insufficiently covered.

#### **4. Concluding and ending the conversation**

The most useful way to end the conversation is to summarize and review everything that has been said, defined and agreed in a way equally clear to the client and the consultant. However, it is important to be aware of the client's feelings.

The way the conversation ends is an important part of the call because it can influence client's actions after the conversation, i.e. if she/he will pursue the goal, steps and sub goals defined in the action plan. It is possible that anxiety will increase in this stage.

In this final stage it is necessary to encourage the ones who make an SOS call to persevere and solve their problems.

Sometimes the call may end when the consultant suggests so. This applies to situations when the conversation is too long, seeming to have no end, "wandering in a circle", bringing nothing new, nor some other quality. Besides suggesting that the conversation should end, the consultant should suggest and agree another call in the near future or simply leave it as a possibility to the client.

In rare situations when the client is offensive - insults the consultant, is manipulative and violent, and the conversation reaches a dead end without being as fruitful as intended, and it is impossible to establish confidence, the conversation may end promptly, with previous announcement.

## 2.6.2. Types and Categories of Calls

### 2.6.2.1. Basic categories of calls received to ASTRA SOS Hotline

All calls received to ASTRA SOS Hotline may be divided into the following categories:

1. Calls directly connected with trafficking
2. Prevention and educational calls
3. Other calls

#### 1. Calls directly connected with trafficking

The first group of calls includes all calls received to the SOS hotline immediately related to the problem of (potential) trafficking in human beings. In this group the following calls are distinguished: *reporting on trafficking in human beings; reporting on the victim's and/or trafficker's location; post festum calls; and calls connected with monitoring and support for clients.*

1.a In the event of calls reporting trafficking in human beings, information on cases of (potential) trafficking in human beings is most frequently provided by the representatives of the NGOs and international organizations, institutions (e.g. social welfare centres) and different services. Families of missing persons, for whom there are indications of having fallen victim to human trafficking, also make missing persons report in this way and share all available information. As a rule, these calls are not made by ordinary citizens, but only by professionals, i.e. the ones who are through their engagement in the cases or through family relations connected with the victim.

Thus, we obtain information on cases, on which data is still being gathered, where identification of the victim/victims has not yet been performed, and the police procedure is most frequently in the investigation stage. The purpose of these calls is to inform the relevant key actors in order to enable further joint work and participation in providing assistance and protection for the victims.

Bearing in mind that collaboration with institutions is an important part of work of the SOS hotline, that it is present in most of the cases, and that a part of the total number of calls relates to communication with representatives of different institutions, there are certain SOS hotline rules for communication with institutions, which the consultants should follow:

- Communication with the representatives of institutions is in writing whenever possible so that there will be always a written record on joint decisions and agreements;

- One of the constant SOS hotline activities is to press the institution through direct contact, communications etc., to respond in a timely manner to cases forwarded to them through the SOS hotline in accordance with their competences;
- Feedback from institutions on undertaken measures and progress / achieved results in the cases on which they have been informed through the SOS hotline should be requested;
- All information relevant for the case are forwarded to competent institutions in a timely manner, and requests of the institutions' representatives met bearing in mind that the victims' rights must not be compromised, and that the action must be in compliance with the organization's and the SOS Hotline working principles.

It is also possible that information on cases of trafficking in human beings is forwarded by the family or representatives of institutions/organizations in the later stage of the procedure for providing assistance to the victim/victims, if there had been no need for concrete assistance before.

1.b *Reporting on the victim's or trafficker's location* is another type of the call directly connected with human trafficking. These calls are made mostly by citizens who suspect (more or less precisely) that in a certain location there are one or more exploited persons (trafficking victims) or persons who exploit someone (traffickers). Thus, the citizens actually report that they suspect that in some place trafficking in human beings is taking place. Calls of this type are mostly anonymous or the citizens want their identity to be protected and data forwarded as anonymous reports.

Thus obtained information is forwarded in a timely manner in writing to all institutions relevant for further action. In order to reveal and provide assistance for a (potential) victim of trafficking in human beings, the police, NGOs and international organizations, home and abroad, competent social welfare centres and other services capable of offering assistance are contacted.

1.c The third type of calls are "*Post Festum*" calls, categorized as *Post Festum I* and *Post Festum II*.<sup>53</sup> These calls are most frequently made by the victims of trafficking in human beings themselves, the ones who escaped from the exploitation situation, but also quite often by different services (the police, social welfare centres) and family members and friends, in order to provide to the victim different forms of assistance and support during recovery (health care, legal, financial assistance, etc.). *Post Festum I* calls match in a way with the reintegration process, i.e. the beginning of reintegration.

<sup>53</sup> At the very start we had a single category of *Post Festum* calls. After almost nine years of work, a need has arisen to introduce a new classification in this group of calls. Classification presented in this text is new and for the time being we have not been able to name them in a more adequate way.

tion. Namely, calls related to a client are recorded as *Post Festum I*, from the moment when emergency assistance to victims has been provided and satisfactory level of stability of her/his physical and psychical status achieved compared to the status during identification of the victim. Calls stay in this category till the end of the judicial proceedings involving the victim. In fact, they coincide almost completely with the duration of legal proceedings.

As soon as legal proceedings are over upon delivery of a final court decision, if other forms of assistance are still being provided, calls are categorized as *Post Festum II*. Namely, upon completion of legal proceedings, the call category changes due to the fact that legal proceeding influence the victim's life in several ways as well as the method of work with the victim. It reflects the most when the victim's security is in question during the proceedings, through pressure imposed on the victim and retraumatization because of the repeated giving of statements and meeting the traffickers in the court. Moreover, there is a possibility of secondary victimization: namely, the victim is awaiting and is constantly uncertain as to whether the trafficker is going to be sentenced for his crime and for how long, and the like.

If the case is not prosecuted, the calls shall be classified as *Post Festum II*, immediately after "first aid" has been provided, that is, immediately after completion of all the procedures connected with the identification process (emergency medical services, gathering of documents related to identification of the victim...).

1.d Calls by persons who are still at risk of being re-trafficked are categorized as *Post Festum II*, as well as those by clients included in the reintegration program who use the services offered within it. There are no time limits for categorizing calls of a person as *Post Festum II*; it depends on the pace of individual recovery. These calls often coincide with the reintegration period.

1.e Calls of the clients who used to participate in the reintegration program, but at the moment only occasionally take part in some of the reintegration activities (creative workshops, counselling, foreign language courses) or periodically call the SOS hotline - are categorized as *support calls*. Even if they do not participate in certain programs, the clients are in permanent contact with SOS hotline consultants, who are more engaged in the work with victims than the external associates.

Support to the clients relates to the resolving of current problems which are not the consequence of their being a victim, but relate to other risks, such as family or partner violence, assistance in resolving some administrative issues, etc.

1.f In the group of calls directly related to trafficking in human beings, the calls related to the accommodation of victims in the shelter are categorized separately. This is the way to contact directly with the victims or organizations/services that intermediate in providing accommodation to victims. Moving victims to safe location is an activity

that requires special arrangement and attention to protect not only the person to be moved from a risk environment, but also the anonymity of the location of the shelter, as well as of other victims found there. Furthermore, by separating this group of calls, we monitor the number of trafficking victims who had to be accommodated in the shelter for safety reasons or is because they did not have any other option.

## 2. Prevention and educational calls

The aim of the prevention and educational calls is to encourage the citizens who are planning to go to work abroad to inform themselves of the ways of safe migration and prevention of trafficking in human beings. Moreover, this group of calls includes also the calls where the citizens generally recognize that they could be exposed to danger and become trafficking victims, whether employment, marriage, acquaintances and similar are in question.

Depending on the reason for calling, information given to the client may be general data on safe migrations and prevention of trafficking in human beings (related to travel documents, visas, institutions responsible for employment abroad, etc.) or can be very specific (if collaboration with individuals or employment agency is in question, an employment contract of specific content should be signed, etc.). During a prevention and education call, the consultants must possess general information on migration related-issues, employment and similar, so that they can forward them to the clients. Thus, the clients of the SOS hotline gain trust into the consultants. For this reason it is necessary for the consultants to permanently update their knowledge in this field.

It is of utmost importance to keep a database on all contacts, legal regulations, visa regimes and similar, so that the clients could be assisted in the best possible way. Since some “employers” and ads are not that easy to check, SOS hotline team analyzes on a regular basis newspapers specialized in publishing various advertisements.<sup>54</sup>

If the abovementioned specific circumstances occur, consultations with our associates (Legal Team) are necessary as well as additional time for feedback.

For calls in this group it is characteristic that the repetition factor is smaller than with the clients from the group of calls that directly relate to human trafficking. The reason for this is that the clients by their prevention calls seek specific assistance on a one-time basis, which they need exactly at that moment, most frequently as information. When they get the information they need, they just do not need our assistance any more. On the contrary, the clients whose calls are directly related to trafficking in hu-

<sup>54</sup> Data on the names of “employers”, “agencies”, telephone numbers and other contacts are sorted out. Since they keep changing quite often their names or telephone numbers or just the advertisement content (leaving the same contacts), comparative analysis from different periods is being performed. Moreover, ASTRA SOS Hotline has a database of all “employers” and “agencies” it has met in its activities, which is very useful for checking and comparing when the new clients contact us.

man beings need help and support on a long-term basis. According to client's needs and wishes, the telephone contact is prolonged and the consultants follow the client through the whole process of her/his preparations to leave the country and during her/his stay abroad till the moment when it is certain that their security is not endangered.

The conversation on the SOS hotline with the prevention and educational goal must not in any way frighten the client, but must offer a clear insight into facts, positive or negative, so that the person could make a responsible decision on further steps.

Within this category, calls could be distinguished according to the type of problem because of which the clients contact us or the type of information they are looking for: calls relating to information on the work of agencies and individuals as employment intermediaries; calls relating to information regarding other reasons for leaving the country (schooling, tourist tours, visits, au pair programs, marriage with a foreign citizen), keeping track of potential victims and calls in which information about AS-TRA are given.

2.a Calls related to *information on the work of agencies and individuals that are employment intermediaries*: the clients call us because they are interested in certain job offers in the country and abroad, but they are not sure of the way how to check if the offer is real, and if this is not the case, how to avoid fraud.

These calls are made particularly by young people who find job offers abroad very attractive and perspective for their professional training. We receive frequent calls from children, i.e. young persons coming of age, bearing in mind that the agencies often offer different programs for schooling abroad intended for high-school students and undergraduates.

The number of calls varies during the year. The calls are more frequent in the first half of the year. Namely, this is when preparations are beginning for programs to be implemented during the summer. There are several steps to be undertaken in response to such type of calls.

The clients get all available information relevant for the assessment of quality and legitimacy of work of job brokers (agencies or individuals), and if their business operations are in conformity with the law.

Namely, the clients get very concrete information if the employment agency has a license issued by a competent ministry (in the Republic of Serbia it is the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development).

If signing of a contract is proposed to a client, before she/he signs it, it is necessary to perform legal analysis of the contract. The client should be informed on how long it is going to take, because the agency usually leaves very little time for making a deci-

sion about signing the contract, which may prevent a timely legal analysis and the client may find herself/himself in a very uncomfortable situation to decide without sufficient data.

Furthermore, if there are basic data, such as: name of the firm, exact place, i.e. seat of the firm, name of the owner, etc., it is possible to check if the firm is founded and registered in compliance with the law. In Serbia, the Serbian Business Registers' Agency ([www.apr.gov.rs](http://www.apr.gov.rs)) has a uniform electronic database, which includes the register of companies, the register of entrepreneurs and the register of foreign branch offices. It is possible to check in this database whether a certain company is registered, including the employment agencies.

2.b The goal of the calls where *information for going abroad* is provided is to point out to citizens the possible risks related to going abroad and provide necessary timely information on all issues concerning travelling. The SOS hotline provides all information on safe migrations (information on preparing of documents, procedures, visa regimes, contacts in embassies or consulates in a foreign country, contacts in NGOs in the country of destination, which might be useful). If the destination is known, it is being checked whenever possible.

Thus, prevention calls keep in a way trafficking in human beings from happening as well as possible danger of abuse and fraud, to which people who travel as tourists, businesspeople or visitors or for any other reason, may be exposed.

2.c *Following potential victims*<sup>55</sup> is one of the categories of prevention calls which is immediately connected with direct work with trafficking victims. The situation in which the client, whose call is classified into this sub-group, is found implies great possibility that she/he could become a victim due to circumstances in which she/he works and/or because of contacts with people, for whom there are indications or it is known that they are close to criminal circles engaged in trafficking in human beings.

We know about cases when very young girls, often minors, were “romantically involved” or had business relationship with someone from the environment close to the trafficker. This person would give them money, find a job and gradually take control and central role in the girl’s life. In such or similar situations we most often receive calls from family members (mothers, sisters) of these girls because they have found out that she is thinking about the possibility or making concrete plans to go abroad, most frequently as someone’s escort or to get employed (e.g. as a dancer)<sup>56</sup>. To act preventively in such situations is extremely hard because the girl does not think that she is in danger in any way and she thinks that the trafficker is her friend.

<sup>55</sup> See 1.2.2. Presumed and possible victim of trafficking in persons

<sup>56</sup> See footnote 19.

Most often the first contact is made with a pretext of giving some information (e.g. in connection with going abroad, employment, further schooling and similar) and completely at the initiative of a family member. Prevention is realized if the SOS hotline consultants (most often in direct and not telephone contact with the potential victim) succeed to establish relationship of trust on which further communication shall rely on, and the point from which, step by step, and if the level of danger to which the girl is exposed permits, measures are to be undertaken to save her from the risky environment. In such situations family support and active cooperation with them is of utmost importance.

Moreover, risk of trafficking in human beings is frequently connected with family and/or partner violence, and sometimes it is really hard to tell what is it all about, but it is certain that the environment is potentially dangerous for the respective person.

These calls are most often made by clients themselves and we always keep direct contact with them, very rarely with persons close to them or family members, which make prevention difficult, and prevention is the purpose of such calls. The main goal is to keep an eye on the situation in order to respond promptly and adequately if the circumstances can be assessed as alarming (e.g. moving them to secure environment).

2.d Specially categorized are calls made in order to obtain information about ASTRA's work and activities. Citizens and representatives of institutions call the SOS hotline to find out about available services related to specific problems as well as the organization's programs, goals and working principles. Frequent reason for calling is their interest in joining the organization. Thus, the SOS hotline comes into contact with persons who want to use their knowledge and enthusiasm to contribute to the fulfilment of the organization's goals.

### 3. Other calls

The "Other calls" group are calls concerning various questions of citizens, most often in a situation when the institutions have not helped them and when they really do not know in whose competence the resolving of a concrete problem is nor which non-institutional organization could help them.

3.a A special subgroup of other calls is *reporting missing persons* cases. These calls mostly relate to the disappearance of adults, for whom there is no direct indications that they could have fallen victim to trafficking in human beings and who did not disappear in war zones.

Disappearance is most frequently reported by family members. In case that they have not reported the case to the local police, they are referred to do so immediately.

Depending on the circumstances of disappearance, NGOs that operate in the territory where the person is suspected to be found or where he/she was seen the last, are being informed. Support to the family of a missing person is provided only through logistics and contacts with organizations in whose focus are such issues and which could provide more concrete forms of assistance, bearing in mind that ASTRA is not specialized in missing persons cases (which are not related to trafficking in human beings). Unfortunately, there are only a few organizations to which families could turn to; at the same time, programs of assistance to the families of persons of full age who have disappeared in peaceful times are rare too. In case of adults, measures undertaken to find these persons are limited, because one of the assumptions is that an adult person is allowed to decide to leave his/her family.

The SOS hotline consultant uses a specified list of questions during such calls, which should help information on the missing person be gathered already during the first conversation. In this way it is possible not to disturb the family unnecessarily because the consultant failed to take all needed data during the first call. Such lists of questions are particularly useful to consultants in the first months of work, while they really do not need them later on.

3.b SOS hotline is contacted by women victims of *family violence* too. Women exposed to violence call to get information, legal assistance, accommodation, etc. ASTRA's intervention includes support to victims of family violence in contacting relevant institutions and NGOs specialized in such problems.

Bearing in mind that there are numerous organizations engaged in family violence issues, it is interesting to note that ASTRA SOS Hotline receives a great number of such calls too.

3.c Cases of attempts of *SOS hotline abuse* have been recorded. These calls are most frequently made by traffickers themselves in order to find out where the victim is during legal proceedings and to influence the witness, or they make SOS hotline calls in order to find out where the residence of the victim who has succeeded to escape from exploitation is. Moreover, the reason for such calls is also an attempt to find out the address of the shelter for victims of trafficking in human beings when they have information that the victim is in the shelter. Moreover, it is possible that the perpetrators represent falsely the whole case as trafficking in human beings where allegedly a third person is involved, while another problem of family violence is in question, when the victim suffers violence from the person who called us.

These calls are one of the reasons why all the SOS hotline consultants must be acquainted in detail with all the cases, otherwise it could happen that they disclose information to the perpetrator himself/herself.

There is an internal consensus related to answering to such calls. We say to the traffickers or their representatives that we have no information. In exceptional cases, when a person is verbally aggressive and insulting, the consultant may warn him/her that she/he will hang up because of the caller's tone of conversation, if he/she does not change it.

3.d Bearing in mind that the SOS hotline number is widely known, *calls of lascivious/ frivolous content* as well as *threatening calls* are expected. The most frequent are phone machine messages or lascivious messages of callers who hang up the phone immediately. These calls are rarely connected with activities of the organization, i.e. with the victim that are being supported.

Threatening calls may be frequent particularly at the time of court hearings or during entering into contact with the victim. Such calls are most frequently made by traffickers and their friends, rarely by lawyers who represent traffickers. The response of the consultant is the same as when abuse of the SOS hotline is in question. However, all members of the organization must know all about these calls in order to undertake possible measures for protection of the staff.

The examples of SOS hotline call are given in Annex 3 of this Manual.

#### 2.6.2.2. *Special calls*

In addition to the categorization of calls based on *the reason why the clients call*, it is possible to categorize calls according to the way in which persons calling the SOS hotline react and behave.

Since human trafficking is the most flagrant human rights violation that causes great suffering to the victims and often to their families, SOS hotline conversations are also very often **emotionally difficult**. The fact that the client is **crying** may cause the SOS hotline consultants, especially the new ones, to feel uneasy, helpless etc. If a caller starts crying, it is best to let her/him cry it out. It is important to let the client know that it is alright to feel that way, that it is alright to cry. As mentioned in the section *Stages of an SOS Call*, it is important to recognize client's feelings and when she/he is overwhelmed by them, to show that you are there for her/him, willing to listen. Do not interrupt the caller; give her/him time to cry it out and gradually calm down. The usual everyday behavioural patterns, such as comforting, explaining etc. should not be used on SOS hotline. Only after the client has calmed down, you may continue the conversation.

Besides the clients, these conversations may also be hard for the consultants. That is why supervisory sessions are very important, where work is done on finding a solution for such situations and possible ways to protect oneself. With the help of supervisor-therapist, these sessions are aimed at mastering techniques, working

out professional dilemmas and personal emotions in work in emotionally difficult circumstances. After having an upsetting call, it is necessary to take some time to overcome the stress and to recover. If you are alone during your shift, lift the phone off the hook for several minutes until you recover and feel able to conduct the next conversation.

**Calls by clients who maintain silence** were also briefly addressed in the section *Stages of an SOS Call*. They may also cause discomfort with the consultant. "The woman who calls and chooses not to speak may be afraid of rejection. The intimacy of a telephone conversation may be too frightening for her. Several attempts may ensue before she really feels safe enough to speak..." During that time the consultant should say something occasionally, but should leave enough time to the caller to gather her/his thoughts. Hanging up the phone should not be done thoughtlessly but with a prior warning and an invitation, encouragement to the client to call back.<sup>57</sup>

Threatening calls are not as frequent as one might expect, considering that the issue here is human trafficking, namely organized crime. Of the total number of calls on ASTRA SOS Hotline, less than 1% belong to this category. These calls are mostly made in the period while judicial proceedings are still underway, that is just before the testimony of the victims. They represent **classic attempts at intimidation**. These calls may also ensue after police raids, when human traffickers attempt to reach their victims again. It is important to remember that, although these calls are directed to the SOS hotline, they are not the calls of clients but of abusers and violent persons. There is a rule on ASTRA SOS Hotline that these calls should be ended as quickly as possible and a letter about such call submitted to the competent institution. On the one hand, this is good for the sake of safety of the SOS hotline, i.e. its employees and clients, while on the other hand, it may also serve as useful evidence in the proceedings against human traffickers.

Finally, there is a group of calls that is probably the same for all tele-appeal services and assistance services. Those are calls made by "**regular clients**" (also called chronic, relentless clients...). We received a large number of such calls on ASTRA SOS Hotline, whether the callers were supportive or wishing to shed light on yet another conspiracy theory or to accuse us of taking part in them.

The literature on SOS hotlines does not contain much of what has been said about this group of calls and advice in this respect is quite scant. The manual *Telefonsko savetovanje – Vodič za savjetovatelje* (Telephone Counselling – Manual for Counsellors)<sup>58</sup> explains that "such calls may cause the counsellor to feel angry, helpless and incom-

57 *Žene za život bez nasilja – Priručnik za volonterke na SOS telefonu*, SOS telefon za žene i decu žrtve nasilja u Beogradu, 1995, p. 108

58 Buljan Flander G. i Čosić I. (2005), *Telefonsko savetovanje – Vodič za savjetovatelje*, Hrabri telefon, telefona za zlostavljanu i zanemarenu djecu, Zagreb

petent, because all attempts to help fail and are thus rather exhausting. When working with 'relentless callers', it is necessary to find constructive ways together to handle such callers, which will help the organization, the individual volunteer and the caller herself/himself." They suggest making a plan at the supervisory meeting for each individual client and presenting it to the "relentless caller". All consultants should adhere consistently to the plan. If the caller is under the influence of alcohol or other addictive substances, that is important to reflect. Conversation in such a condition is unproductive and unconstructive, which is why it should be ended, but as with conversations of clients who maintain silence, always with prior notice.

It is important to recommend to these "callers", as well as to persons with mentally altered behaviour, the organizations that may provide them with assistance, but only those organizations and institutions that have credibility in that area. Never do it for the sole reason of diverting the "regular clients" attention from your own SOS hotline and directing them to another tele-appeal service.

### ***2.6.3. Active listening techniques on the SOS hotline***

As said in the section *Stages of an SOS call*, work on the SOS Hotline is based on verbal communication. It is of utmost important that the SOS Hotline consultants master well the active listening skill which this article deals with.

Communication is the process of conveying news, the exchange of ideas, information, decisions, requests among persons. It can be verbal, nonverbal (mime, gesticulation, physical closeness, body position and the like) or paraverbal communication (ah, mmm, hmmm etc.).

In order to be successful, communication must be: open, two-way, and based on the good communication principles, primarily the active listening principle and the principle of clear and understandable communication. It means that a participant in a successful conversation is expected to be active as a listener on the one hand, and to speak openly, clearly and precisely on the other. Moreover, she/he must ensure that the other participants in communication hear and understand her/him and to eliminate possible misunderstanding as soon as possible.

If the communication is not conducted according to the mentioned principles, it is not going to be successful and it will lose its basic function – the information transfer and exchange.

Active listening is a structured form that includes listening and answering, and the focus is on the talker. It has been perceived as a method to overcome the listening technique faults, which means that the person who listens is expected to be able to repeat her/his collocutor's statements, with particular emphasis on the expressed emotions and the very content of the conversation.

However, active listening is also much more than that: authentic interest in what other people have to say is in question. It means a real effort to understand the other person and active posing of questions by the listener to obtain new data, but without introducing one's own ideas into the other party's speech. This is the only way to reach a complete and accurate understanding by the listener.

Active listening has several characteristics that make it extremely important for the work of the SOS hotline consultants. Conducting a conversation on the SOS hotline in accordance with the active listening principles encourages the consultants to listen carefully to the client, thus contributing to avoiding misunderstanding. Namely, during communication they confirm whether and how they understand what is the client saying. It is extremely important to encourage, by applying these principles, the SOS hotline caller to speak openly, to say and express more than she/he would if the consultant did not show authentic interest in the conversation. It is essential that the client feels that the person on the other side of the line really wants to listen to what she/he has to say and to get acquainted with her/his problems, because only then will the client tell all the details.

The SOS hotline consultants must know what makes a good listener so they could apply adequately their knowledge during the conversation with the clients:

- a good listener knows how to hear the message: her/his attention is focused on the person who is talking; the listener stops any other activity and does not let anything distract her/him; makes a selection of important information and recognizes emotional messages;
- a good listener can read between the lines: namely, SOS hotline callers do not speak openly about their problems. Sometimes it is necessary to paraphrase the story and ask additional questions in order to understand the client completely and make her/him open up. It is desirable to use the open-end questions, because one cannot answer with simple yes/no. These questions stimulate the conversation and encourage the client to talk about details. Moreover, they leave to the client more space to explain the problem. In direct contact, nonverbal communication may also be an excellent indicator of the client's situation, and particular attention should be paid if there is an imbalance between the verbal and nonverbal communication;
- a good listener knows how to assess the importance of given information: before making a conclusion, additional questions should be asked and all the answers considered;
- a good listener knows how to respond to the message: feedback to the SOS hotline client through recapitulating or repeating parts of the conversation or

important data is crucial, because this is the way the client will learn what and how has the consultant heard what the client had to say.

**Active listening means:**

- Focusing attention on the collocutor
- Showing understanding for her/his story
- Following nonverbal messages of the collocutor
- Accurateness and objectivity in comprehension of the essence of conversation
- Respecting other people's stands
- Allowing silence in your conversation
- Emotion- and content-related feedback
- Asking open-end questions

Active listening also includes a set of techniques applied to improve communication.

Active listening techniques <sup>59</sup>

Technique	Purpose	How to fulfil a purpose	Example
<b>Encouraging</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- maintaining attention of the collocator</li> <li>- make the collocator keep talking</li> </ul>	One should not agree nor disagree with the collocator, but use neutral words. Use phrases making sure that the general tone is positive.	<p>"Ah, I see..."</p> <p>"Aha..."</p> <p>"Yes, yes..."</p> <p>"That's interesting..."</p>
<b>Explaining</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- maintaining attention of the collocator</li> <li>- make the collocator keep talking</li> <li>- explaining</li> <li>- getting more information</li> </ul>	Looking for more information from the collocator (not frequently and in a pleasant tone of voice).	<p>"Could you tell me more about..."</p> <p>"You are talking about..."</p> <p>"What do you think about..."</p>
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- showing the collocator that the other side listens and understands what she/he has to say</li> <li>- showing the collocator that the other side "has caught" the facts</li> <li>- checking if the other side has understood what the collocator just said</li> </ul>	Returning the same message not adding nor taking away anything. Other words are used, but of the same or very similar meaning.	<p>"I though you said that you feel depressed lately" (I am in a bad mood, I am crying all the time, I don't feel like doing anything).</p> <p>"So, you would like to learn more about the active listening strategies. Is it true?" (I don't know much about this topic, but I would like to learn)</p>
<b>Verbal reflecting</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- showing the collocator that the other side understands how she/he feels</li> </ul>	Mirroring the collocator's basic mood.	"It seems that the story about trafficking in human beings has really shocked you"

59 Leadership Center At Washington State University Adapted from The Poynter Institute; <http://poynter.org>  
D:\My Documents\Websites\lead\library\resources\RESOURCES\Communication\Active Listening Techniques.doc

<p><b>Recapitulating</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- showing the collocator that the other side understands how she/he feels<sup>60</sup></li> <li>-showing the collocator that the other side "has caught" the facts</li> <li>- checking if the other side has understood what the collocator just said</li> </ul>	<p>During the conversation or at the very end, the other side can recapitulate what the collocator said.</p>	<p>"I just want to check if I have understood you..."</p>
<p><b>Nonverbal reflecting</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- "catch" the collocutors nonverbal messages</li> <li>- compare them with the verbal ones</li> </ul>	<p>Collocator's language and mime are verbalized.</p>	<p>"I notice that you laugh when you talk about it..."</p>

As a form of communication, active listening has its roots in counselling and psychotherapy. It is particularly connected to Carl Roger's Client-Centered Therapy, where the idea of the open and non-directive approach in communication originates from. This principle has been taken over from this trend in psychotherapy and has been modified in a certain way and applied in work on the SOS Hotline.

However, it does not mean of course that it is expected from the phone consultants to be trained psychotherapists, but this kind of therapy skill may be of great importance in the situations with which the SOS Hotline consultants meet on a daily basis

Two basic concepts of active listening developed by Carl Rogers in his psychotherapy are: reflective listening and mirroring techniques.

### 2.6.3.1. Reflective listening

In reflective listening, the person who listens adopts, as Rogers calls it, "therapeutic hypothesis". It is assumed that the capacity for self-perceiving, resolving of problems and personal progress are primarily in the person who speaks. It means that the basic

<sup>60</sup> If you ask the client "How are you?" and she answers "Hmmm, I'm fine", "hmm" part is much more important for the consultant than "I'm fine". The consultant must not be satisfied with desirable answers.

question posed by the SOS hotline consultant is not “How do I perceive the client?”, but “How the client perceives herself/himself?”.

Rogers and his associates explained this concept defining it through four components: empathy, acceptance, congruence, i.e. realness and concreteness.

*Empathy* is a desire and effort of the listener to understand the client through her/his reference framework, and not through the listener’s stand, i.e. not interpreting the client’s psychological situation by some theory, standards or own comprehension of the situation. Guided by this principle, the SOS consultants will try to comprehend directly the thoughts and feelings of a person who dials the SOS hotline or other client with whom the consultant is in direct contact. Verbal and nonverbal messages sent to the client at the same time prove that the consultant understands and supports the client. The consultant will try to comprehend the essence without any interpretation and judgment, which should encourage the caller to make a deeper self-introspection and analyze the problems she/he faces.

The authors emphasize how surprisingly difficult it is to reach empathy. The biggest obstacle is the need to counsel, evaluate and (dis)approve from one’s own angle of perception.

*Acceptance* is very close to empathy and relates to respect for the person the way she/he is, a priori and without judgment. Acceptance must be unconditional. This is what the SOS consultant may achieve if she/he avoids not to show her/his (dis)approval of the collocutor’s statements during the conversation. Such attitude influences the other person and makes it less defensive, i.e. the client does not need to defend his/her own stands and feelings, and wants to reveal a problem, which in another situation would not be revealed at all.

*Congruency* relates to openness, sincerity and authenticity of the SOS consultants. In accordance with this theory, if the consultant is angry or provoked by something, she should tell the client that she feels that way and not hide it nor pretend in order to be accepted by that person. It is assumed that openness of the consultant will provoke the same feelings of the client and that the conversation will be most certainly more productive.

Congruency does not always go together with empathy and acceptance. Namely, if there are some negative emotions toward the client, the problem must be solved right away so that the consultant could work on empathy and acceptance.

*Concreteness* relates to focusing on the specific and not general places in defining a problem. Namely, frequent high level of vagueness and abstractness of the client’s statements on the SOS Hotline is an expression of the client’s impossibility to face the situation the way it is, and the consultant’s role is to encourage and help the person to be more concrete while stating the problem. One of the ways to do so is to pose

sub questions to each of the generalized sentences, not neglecting them nor approving them in any way. This is a way to reveal gradually the reason for the phone call.

### 2.6.3.2. *Mirroring techniques*

The above mentioned techniques of focused listening may be applied through the “mirroring” method, which means that the person who listens tries to explain and repeat the narrative of the SOS Hotline client.

Advantages of this approach are: better understanding of the client’s narrative, it can help the client to comprehend her/his problem better, to think in that direction, and persuade her/him that someone wants to help her/him and perceive things from her/his angle.

Some of the principles of reflective listening are as follows:

- More listening than talking.
- Personal details are essential, while general and abstract ones should not be in the focus of conversation. The question is not anymore about information that the client gives on herself/himself, but on other people. Thus, the client continues with the analysis of her/his own experience trying to perceive better her/his own situation and to approach more efficiently the problem solving.
- The objective of the reflective listening is taking over the responsibility by the client, and that is why the consultant must not lead the client to talk about things that the consultant considers to be important, but the topics of the conversation must be the ones the client wants to talk about. Effect of such an approach is to encourage the person who made the SOS hotline call to continue to examine and express her/his thoughts and emotions.
- The questions for the client may be extremely inspiring, but their form is also of utmost importance, because they may cut the client’s initiative and transfer the focus to something that the consultant recognized as an issue. The questions of the “Why?” type may be particularly adverse, so another form should be used, for instance: “It is very interesting, please tell me something more about it?”

One of the most distinctive characteristics of this listening method is that the consultant must respond in a certain way to the client’s emotions, and not only to the conversation content. The consultant will establish the best contact with the client by responding to clearly expressed emotions, but since the majority of people do not express openly and directly their emotions, response of the consultant to the implicitly expressed emotions is desirable. One should have in mind that the person who calls the SOS hotline most frequently does not seek a solution to a visible problem, but the way to fight her/his emotional and social dilemmas and difficulties.

### 2.6.3.3. *What are the barriers that impede active listening?*

The SOS Hotline consultants as listeners during a conversation may make numerous mistakes. These mistakes originate from the fact that perception of people and events may be frequently incorrect or insufficiently clear because the consultant failed to pay attention to certain information or assess these information as essential. Selection of such relevant information is influenced by various factors resulting that certain data are more distinguished and taken into account than the other data. The registered tendency is conditioned by age, sex, the first impression of the collocutor, previous experience of the listener, even her/his perception of herself/himself. Many of these trends and habits may be easily overcome once identified.

#### 1. *Judging the client*

Tendency to judge the person who called the SOS hotline originates from the general tendency to judge other people and their behaviour. However, this largely reduces the capability to hear and understand their message. Unfortunately, it is much easier to judge a person than carefully listen to her/him and identify the problem.

#### 2. *Talking instead of listening*

Each call to the SOS Hotline is a dialogue and exchanging of information. The consultant must take care and not turn the contact into a lecture that she/he will give to the caller. The consultant must not in any way cause an information overflow, her/his primary goal is to listen to the client and get involved.

#### 3. *"I've Heard it All Before" attitude*

If the consultant thinks that she/he knows what the client is going to say before she/he utters it, the consultant probably won't listen fully and attentively to what the caller of the SOS hotline has to say. Moreover, in such situations it is possible that the consultant will interrupt the client's thought process and finish her/his sentence instead of her/him. Such attitude toward the collocutor is the basis for misunderstanding, frustration and possible conflict.

#### 4. *Twisting facts or improper understanding of the client's words*

The consultant can do this so that she/he could hear what she/he expects that the client is going to say. Thus, the consultant does not accept the caller the way she/he is with her/his problems, but only the way the consultant wants to see her/him. The consequence is that the consultant does not understand why the client has contacted the SOS hotline for help in the first place, and the consultant hears only her/his version of the problem.

A serious and a very much present issue in communication in general is the discrepancy in interpreting words and expressions. Namely, the whole previous experience of any person (education, profession, milieu, etc.) determines the significance of certain words used in everyday speech, and may largely differ from one person to an-

other. The problem may be resolved simply by requesting for additional explanation of a word, phrase and similar.

### 5. Emotional response of an SOS consultant

Involving one's own emotions and emotionally coloured interpretation of the conversation with the client may lead to incorrect understanding of the conversation content.

Beside emotional responses for which the trigger may be the very conversation, active listening may be impeded by fear as a consequence of uncertainty of what lies ahead and what is the client going to say during the SOS hotline conversation, how it is going to influence our attitudes and opinions, if it is going to point to the necessity of changing our attitudes and opinions.

In professions where immediate contact with other persons is a main or important part of the work, such as doctors, teachers, psychologists, and even the SOS hotline consultants, perception and assessment of a person is an important factor of professional efficiency. The importance of social perception as one of the basic mechanisms of social interaction, both in everyday life and in one's profession, opens many questions of its accurateness. Most probably, the majority of people do everything possible to understand and interpret correctly actions of other people, but it is also very possible that no one is spared from making mistakes.

Recognizing some of the most frequent *factors that influence the accurate perception of other persons*<sup>61</sup> may diminish the number of wrong assumptions that some persons, inter alia the SOS hotline consultants, will make during the conversation:

- Implicit personality theory: each individual holds to a network of assumptions on human nature, on the fact which character traits are essential, the way they are connected, the way they are expressed. An individual is most frequently not aware of these traits and they are called with a reason *implicit personality theories*. They are the basis of our expectations and guide our perceptions of other people's behavior.
- Halo effect: general tone in evaluation of different aspects of an individual. Namely, if a personal trait of an individual is assessed as positive, it is very probable that other traits of the individual will be assessed as positive too. The reasons may be the following: insufficient sample size regarding behavior or other data important for accurate assessment; general impression may influence type of assessment; the level of the trait concreteness may play a role in forming a halo effect as well as insufficient attention of the observer.
- Unfunded generalization: one of the mistakes relating to the perception of other persons may occur in situations when the observer understands the trait expressed

61 Havelka, N. (2001), *Socijalna percepcija*, Zavod za udžbenike u nastavna sredstva, Belgrade,

by a person-actor in a moment as permanent attribute of that person (temporal extension). Moreover, lack of information may be exceeded by concluding by analogy (metaphoric generalization). Concluding may rely on functional analogy when on the basis of the function that certain parts of the body and face have or a certain thing that an individual possesses, one makes a conclusion of permanent traits of the individual. Drawing any conclusion on the basis of the similarity is not a rare form of generalization. Namely, if we, when we meet someone for the first time, observe a trait which reminds us of a certain person we know, we incline to attribute to this person other traits of our acquaintance.

- Excessive persuasion regarding accurateness of one's judgments: people tend to be greatly assured that their judgments and assessments are correct. Such tendency is manifested in different ways: the tendency for initial impressions to persist; mistaken central tendency, i.e. conviction that traits of majority of people are somewhere around average; reference to consensus where people most frequently represent a judgment of their own as opinion of the "majority", "all", "any sensible person" and similar; self-confidence of experts that their conclusions, judgments and assessments are correct; confirmation of expected: tendency to select and remember information which are in compliance with the existing beliefs; provoking certain behaviour of an individual is also tactics used to show that their judgments and assessments of that person are correct.
- Basic attributional bias: tendency to attribute behaviour of other people to their permanent personality traits, and our own behaviour to the influence of the milieu.

### Active listening does not involve:

- False listening
- Unilateral listening
- Selective listening and data rejecting
- Defensive listening
- Talking about oneself (usurping conversation)
- Giving advice
- Criticizing, giving a diagnosis
- Thinking what we are going to say next
- Changing topics
- Reconstructing what the collocutor said
- Inserting own reactions

#### 2.6.3.4. *How to listen actively?*

##### *Listen now, talk later*

After the conversation, the consultant should inform her/his colleagues of the details. Saying out loud what she/he has heard during the call helps her/him to revise and remember information. Thus, she/he will explain possible unclear parts of the conversation and possibly notice the details she/he had not recognized before.

##### *Learn how to wish to listen*

To focus on the collocutor or topic can be exercised and learned. It is necessary to focus on the content of the client's narrative. One should learn to focus on the client's words and emotions and exclude all impeding influences from the immediate environment.

##### *Be present*

Absence and preoccupation with one's own private problems and events not related directly to work are one of the most impeding factors during active listening. The consultant must be present and focused on the client, flow of conversation and the client's needs at that moment.

##### *Listen with "whole body"*

Active listening means to be focused on certain content, which is achieved by determining the focus of the whole body and mind of the listener. The SOS hotline listener participates in the conversation not only with her/his hearing sense, but sending during the whole activity in direct contact with the client verbal and nonverbal signs that she/he is attentively listening. It includes the body position, gestures that confirm that the consultant listens to the client's narrative (e.g. nodding), expressing positive and encouraging attitude.

##### *Control your emotional "weak points"*

Each person has her/his "weak points" and reacts very emotionally when certain triggers appear. The trigger may be any stimulus: word, situation, person, physical characteristic. Under the trigger influence, emotional response of the SOS consultant may alter the message sent to the client or cause an incorrect assessment of the client's personality, situation and needs.

##### *Learn how to control the impeding factors*

The situation in which the conversation with the client is taking place will not be always conducted in the peace of the SOS Hotline premises. In direct contact during field actions, the SOS consultant must learn to control the most impeding factors so that they won't take control over the communication with the client and disable

a productive conversation flow. Impeding factors are numerous: telephone ringing, outside noise, conversation of other persons interfering with yours and similar). Even if the conversation is conducted in such circumstances, the active listening principle should be applied to the fullest possible extent.

Frequent question at the SOS hotline trainings is whether to be on a first-name basis with the client or not. Our rule is to follow the client's choice. If she chose not to be on the first name basis with us, we comply. In time, all the clients gradually alter to the communication on the first-name basis.

### Some hints for communicating with children

- As said in the section *Principles of Work on ASTRA SOS Hotline*, calls made by children should be handled in such a way so as to ensure maximum protection of their rights, talking care of their best interest and respecting the principle of participation. When we talk about children, we have in mind all persons under the age of 18.
- Always respect child's privacy and wish to remain anonymous. This enables children to speak freely and to confide in you without fear of possible consequences or punishment.
- Focus on the needs of that specific child. Before asking a question, think whether you really need the information you are going to ask for.
- Always be aware of the trauma the child has survived, whether this is child trafficking or other form of violence.
- Do not patronize.
- Do not babble.
- Do not call them "dear", "love" etc.
- Do not correct the child whether he/she speaks with you on the first name basis or not.
- Do not suggest answers to children; very often, they will give you the answer you wish to hear.
- Children are reluctant to talk about their feelings.
- Do not refer the children to other services or SOS hotlines just like that because your organization/institution is not specialized in their problem. Always have in mind that it might have taken ages for her/him to finally decide to contact you. In Serbia, there is a specialized hotline for children.
- Do not use professional jargon, diagnoses etc. when you talk with the child.
- Trust the child.

## 2.6.4. Case management

### 2.6.4.1. About case management and case manager

The manner in which a case will be managed after the initial contact (meeting or interview with the victim) is very important and greatly determines the impact of subsequent assistance.

In contemporary societies, the case management model is increasingly present in the so-called humanitarian professions as the most appropriate way to work with clients. The case management model is not a profession in itself. Instead, it represents a collaborative and multidisciplinary practice pursued by experts in various areas (social workers, psychologists, lawyers, pedagogues, physicians etc.).

Case management is a method of social work where, in consultations with the beneficiary/client, needs are assessed, services arranged, coordination conducted, monitoring, evaluation and advocacy used in the best interest of the client. *The American Association of Social Workers defines case management as „a method of providing services whereby a professional social worker assesses the needs of the client and the client's family, when appropriate, and arranges, coordinates, monitors, evaluates, and advocates for a package of multiple services to meet the specific client's complex needs.“*<sup>62</sup>

In addition to the client, the most important person in the case management process is the case manager that manages the whole process and is familiar with the basic principles and mode of operation of this method. The case manager is a professional in charge of a specific case, establishing and using the available resources in the own organization and local community necessary to meet the needs of the client and provide pertinent services. The case manager tries to organize and establish coordination among various systems in relation to the recognized needs of the client and set up a network of services to provide the desired assistance and support.

The main tasks or roles of the case manager include, but are not limited to: client empowerment by personal capacity building, i.e. maintenance, identification of strengths and possibilities to adapt and develop motivation to overcome stressful situation. The manager also works on promotion and development of the effective system of services and advancement of links among the available systems and the client. The important role of a case manager comprises improvement of the scope and capacity of the services provided by various systems and integration and coordination of the resources to avoid overlapping, cost ineffectiveness and inefficiency.

**Two basic aims of case management are:**

1. *Care continuity* – meaning ongoing evaluation of provided services from the point of view of the beneficiary's needs and, accordingly, utilization of new services;

<sup>62</sup> [http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/sw\\_case\\_mgmt.asp](http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/sw_case_mgmt.asp)

2. *Maximum level of operation* – fluid, changeable category depending on potentials of the beneficiaries and nature of underlying problems.

The case management principles are:

1. *Service integration* – the leading principle of case management, based on maximum use and coordination of available potentials present in the public, non-profit and informal sectors.
2. *Accessibility of various forms of assistance and support* – social, psychological, medical, legal – from case detection onwards, through all pertinent stages.
3. All clients should have *equal access to services* – rights and possibilities to use the available services are granted to all who need the assistance and support to meet their social needs.
4. *Basic services should be accessible* to all under equal conditions, contrary to *high standard services* that are reserved only to some. High standard services depend on client's material status and for this reason it is necessary to make all services available to all clients, regardless of their financial capacities.
5. *Quality of care* implies its efficacy and effectiveness in compliance with the rights of clients to own choice and own decisions. Clients are active subjects, instead of passive objects of decisions made by others.
6. *Advocacy* by the case manager is a process of representing the client's interests and, in parallel, raising awareness of the client as well as empowering him/her to build own capacities and skills for advocacy of own interests, from help to self-help.
7. *Totality of needs* means that the case manager has to take a holistic approach to the needs of any client, take them as a whole, and accordingly, provide various kinds of services, such as social, health, psychological, educational, and financial.
8. *Client empowerment* implies respect for the client as a person, support and stimulation of his/her capacities, development of partnership and their self-empowerment and self-esteem.
9. Principles, needs for continuous care, with coordination and partnership of various systems/services/organizations to establish the maximum level of clients' functionality, make case management a complex process which relies on gradual and systematic progress.

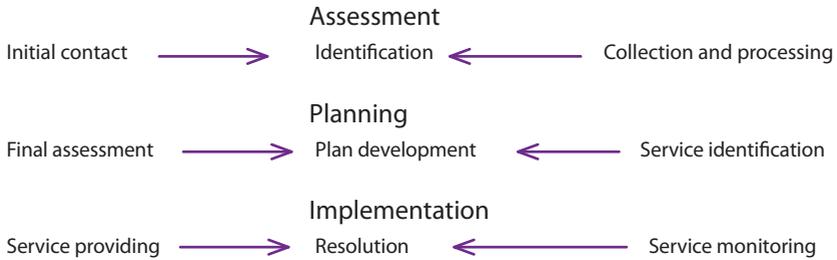
**The case management process** is composed of several phases. These are case detection, problem assessment, service planning, referral and coordination, monitoring and evaluation, and subsequent assessment:

1. **Case detection** – implies detection of a client necessitating help and support to overcome various problems, meeting the client, collecting basic information on

the client and his/her environment and how the client perceives own problems and ways to overcome them.

2. **Problem assessment (identification)** – collection of data from the immediate client's environment; in addition to the family and informal system, this include the professionals in the health and educational system, employers and all others acquainted with the nature of the problem. Identification of needs and problems are related to the principle of "here and now". The past is important to understand the present. The assessment is focused on understanding of the client's situation and providing the grounds for planning and action, where not only needs and problems are identified, but also the client's current and potential capacities. The assessment is based on each specific case, needs, capacities of the client and their milieu.
3. **Service planning** from the point of view of the client and available capacities. Planning is conducted from an individual point of view, needs and most appropriate way to meet them. Planning is not conducted on behalf of the client, but in cooperation with him/her. Content-wise, a plan has a form of a contract defining the objectives, types of services, duties of the client and case manager. In cooperation with professionals in other systems, the most appropriate forms of care and support are identified to meet the client's needs in view of the available capacities. The plan is a product of consensus, based on real understanding of the capacities of the client and the surrounding system.
4. **Referral and coordination** imply higher involvement of the client and the system that provides the required services. Each of them is responsible for implementation of the program tasks and for monitoring of the quality of received services. In this stage the case manager is in charge of: *establishment of coordination and synchronization among the various systems, continuous exchange of information, ongoing monitoring of services provided from the point of view of comprehensive meeting of the client's needs.*
5. **Monitoring and evaluation** are holistically based, targeted at the totality of client's needs. By coordination of intersectoral activities and exchange of information, the case manager continuously monitors the case, evaluates the quality of services from the point of view of client's interest and identifies new needs resulting from various circumstances, which does not put the client in the position of a passive participant.
6. **Subsequent assessment** – according to the changed circumstances, subsequent assessment is undertaken or service plan revised. The aim of this stage is to identify resources and limitations, needs for development of new or modification of old services.

### Case management process<sup>63</sup>:



### The case management models are:

1. Role-based case management
2. Organization-based case management
3. Responsibility-based case management

*Role-based case management* implies that the most of the services are provided by the case manager, i.e. system/service in which he/she works. The model is mostly used in work with clients whose needs may be met by one system or different spatially separated systems.

*Organization-based case management* is focused on providing a comprehensive set of services aimed at a client burdened with multiple problems. The aim is to meet their diverse needs within a single organizational unit, be that residential institution or various forms of day care centres. The main roles of the case manager comprise identification of multiple needs of clients, development of the pertinent plan, coordination of multidisciplinary team operations and monitoring of the outcome of the services provided.

*Responsibility-based case management* relies on transfer of functions of case management from professionals to non-professionals, and it is applied when the client no longer requires professional help, but still needs long- or short-term support from persons close to the client or from volunteers. Professionals should organize, train and coordinate these teams, conduct ongoing monitoring of the client needs, and interventions in cases of emergency or crisis.

<sup>63</sup> Milosavljević Milosav, Brkić Miroslav (2005), *Socijalni rad u zajednici*, Socijalna Misao, Beograd

#### 2.6.4.2. Challenges, limitations and advantages of case management<sup>64</sup>

*Limited resources* are the key issue in each individual case, particularly the material resources and access to institutions and information, that may place a case manager into a difficult situation, since he/she is considered omnipotent, but when the expected response is not achieved and the problem is not resolved, it may well happen that clients start considering him/her incompetent or disinterested or insufficiently committed. This is an issue, since the rapport, or mutual trust is thus affected and may result in deterioration of progress achieved with the client.

*Limited duration of use of certain services* – use of certain services is limited to a set period of time, e.g. placement into a shelter, which is not a successful solution since it places restrictions to both the client and the case manager. It has been generally recognized that a certain period of time is needed, as well as certain resources, to establish the rapport with client and help them embark on the reintegration process, and rebuild own self-confidence. Case management 24/7 is a huge responsibility where burnout is common. Therefore, it is important to be aware of one's own limitations, capabilities, internal and external obstacles in everyday work with the clients. This may affect not only the case managers, but the clients as well, so that a victim may feel the change and deterioration of the relationship with the own case manager as a result of the burnout. In the light of the time needed to establish the relationship of mutual trust with a victim and the importance of such rapport between case managers and victims, these changes are recognized as obstacles to further work.

There is also a risk of *loss of the professional distance* from the clients and their problems, where empathy becomes sympathy, making the work less effective.

In spite of all challenges and difficulties, case managers are perceived as persons important not only to the victims, but to other anti-trafficking actors.

Before all, case management is associated with *great advantages for the victims themselves*, since the case manager provides everyday support to clients in daily contacts with representatives of various institutions; she/he instructs the victims on their rights, provides counselling and is a confidant that is so frequently missing, where all these roles are conducive to empowerment of the victims and their independence.

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<sup>64</sup> <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/HumanTrafficking/CaseMgmt/ib.htm> - Heather J. Clawson and Nicole Dutch, Case Management and the Victim of Human Trafficking: A Critical Service for Client Success, June 2008, part of a larger project: Study of HHS Programs Serving Human Trafficking Victims

## How can effective case management be achieved<sup>65</sup>

There are several key requirements for successful case management:

*Culturally sensitive case managers* – this may imply education on religion and culture of potential victims to make sure that the first contact with the case manager is positive and appropriate. Additionally, this preparation and training may help the case manager recognize the victims' needs (e.g. one should know how to inquire about some information that may be taboos in some cultures). The case manager may also use the knowledge on client's culture and history to make it easier to identify appropriate services for the client. We cannot expect a client to comply with a pre-set plan if the plan has not been developed to take into account the client's past, history and culture.

*Individual approach* – implies that work with a victim will start from the current point and progress (gradually) to the set objective. Flexibility is necessary, so that we should start with what the client finds most comfortable, instead of making assumptions on her/his capacities. For some case managers, approach leading the client to successful recovery involves teaching the client to do something on her/his own instead of doing it for him/her. Involvement of a case manager should gradually recede, i.e. client's dependence on the case manager and other service providers should be reduced.

*Cooperation with other institutions* – Good cooperation with others is a necessary factor making it possible to meet the needs of the client. This involves cooperation of the case manager with staff of other institutions providing services for the victims, cooperation of the case manager with the judiciary and police. Only ongoing cooperation of all involved actors will make it possible to meet the needs of clients.

*Permanent case manager* – the importance of assigning a case manager to each victim has been generally recognized. In the light of the difficulties involved with building trust between the victim and the case manager, any repetitive change of the assigned case manager is an issue for the victim that hinders his/her progress.

*Care for case managers* – Long working hours, emotional commitment and secondary traumatization experienced by case managers require special attention. Case managers experience stress, frustration and difficulties in providing services and support necessitated by their clients. They need time to overcome their own personal reactions to each case, regardless of whether this involves a session with a therapist or just some free time. Each organization/institution that works with victims of trafficking in human beings has to reexamine their own policies and practice relating to secondary trauma experienced by their staff that work with such clients.

<sup>65</sup> <http://aspe.hhs.gov/hsp/07/HumanTrafficking/CaseMgmt/ib.htm> - Heather J. Clawson and Nicole Dutch, Case Management and the Victim of Human Trafficking: A Critical Service for Client Success, June 2008, part of a larger project: Study of HHS Programs Serving Human Trafficking Victims

### 2.6.4.3. Case management at ASTRA

When case management is concerned, we had numerous dilemmas and searched for adequate solutions. We are still on the way since no solution is ideal, and over time a need for change, partial or complete, may emerge.

Now, management of individual cases is organized in such a way that each client has an assigned “mentor” (case manager). It need not necessarily be the person answering the call or establishing any form of contact with the victim first, since this may result in inadequate burden of work for some managers. Instead, the assignment follows a set sequence. Thus, a person with the fewest active cases has the priority when a new case is to be assigned.

A case manager mostly involved with a client bears the “first level” of responsibility for accompanying the victim in institutions, field actions, etc. As to a substitute, the possibility to have the second and third level of responsibility is also an option. For example, if there is a second level responsibility, all staff may substitute, according to any given situation; if there is a third level of responsibility, a person is assigned for the second level responsibilities, and all other staff may share the third level duties. The case manager should be promptly notified on all relevant activities undertaken while she/he was absent, since the manager is the one in ongoing contact with the client.

All case managers are required to submit monthly reports and set activity plans in consultations with pertinent clients, defining the objectives, possible methods and prognosis of the progress.

All members of the consultancy teams and case managers may give proposals and comments during the work and with joint efforts produce good proposals.

A case manager is focused at as many aspects of the client’s life as possible, organizing his/her free time (e.g. according to interests and preferences provide information on various courses, activities, events or try to resolve the problem of unemployment but not losing the sigh of her/his family situation, etc.).

In our opinion, substituting the case manager for a set period of time is highly questionable! It may happen that one case manager has three active cases, and the other three passive cases. In the situation when we want to take the burden off the back of the former, substitution is not in line with the client’s needs. Since the clients tend to get attached to their case manager easily, in case of periodical rotation, they would be exposed to additional stress. The problem may be resolved by assigning new cases to staff with more passive cases.

## 2.7. Trafficking in persons – complex trauma experience

*Biljana Slavković, psychotherapist at the Psychodrama Institute, Belgrade*

**“My wounds are inside me. They are not visible.”**

*A female trafficking survivor exploited in Italy<sup>66</sup>*

**Note on terminology:** in this article the author is using the term “survivor” instead of the term “victim”. The term “survivor” offers a realistic picture of a person who, having survived a complex trauma, still has a certain degree of capacity left for recuperation and the rest of their life. The term “victim” labels a person, denying them for good an opportunity to live a life without violence.

In the Serbian text, the term “survivor” is used in the female gender especially because of the statistics documenting that women account for the highest percentage of persons who have survived the trauma of trafficking. Of course, the term fully refers to men and children of both sexes who have experienced trafficking in persons.

The terms “victimiser” and “trafficker” are synonymous in this text.

### *Introduction*

All government institutions, as well as non-governmental organisations, which are responsible for the field of trafficking in human beings (including prevention, identification and victim assistance) are in indirect or direct contact with victims and survivors. Even if this contact does not exist due to the nature of or stage in activities, professionals working in the aforementioned organisations and institutions must have a basic knowledge of the effects of trafficking in persons on mental and physical health of individuals. Why is this so important? Because of the complexity of the trafficking phenomenon which will be dealt with in this publication in detail. In order for the professionals in the area of prevention and in other activities (related to combating human trafficking and protecting survivors) to be successful, we shall provide basic information and experiences on the devastating effect that trafficking has on people who have survived it. Therefore, it is essential to explain the principle mechanisms of psychological trauma as well as a psychological and physical response to it.

“The study of psychological trauma implies facing both inborn human vulnerability and a capacity to be evil existing in human nature. The study of trauma always means being witness to horrific events. The witnesses of trauma inflicted by a human being will find themselves stuck in a conflict situation between the victim and the victimiser. Morally, it is impossible to stay neutral in such a conflict. The witness

<sup>66</sup> Cathy Zimmerman, Mazeda Hossain, Kate Yun, Brenda Roche, Linda Morison and Charlotte Watts, *Stolen Smiles: The physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe*. LSHTM, 2006 [http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/hpu/docs/Stolen%20Smiles%20%20Trafficking%20and%20Health%20\(2006\).pdf](http://www.lshtm.ac.uk/hpu/docs/Stolen%20Smiles%20%20Trafficking%20and%20Health%20(2006).pdf); 10/10/2009, p. 82

is forced to take sides. It is very challenging to take the side of victimisers for this requires that the witness does nothing, which corresponds with the universal need for evil to stay invisible, unheard of and unmentioned. On the other hand, the victim demands that the witness share the painful burden. The victim asks for involvement and remembrance.”<sup>67</sup>

The above mentioned role of a witness may be noticed both in the role of a teacher who discovers that her student has been a victim of trafficking as well as in an investigating judge who prosecutes in the case of human trafficking; in the role of a social worker who faces a client who has survived trafficking, or in the role of NGO activists. All professionals are humans with personal values, as well as with certain prejudices or restrictions in knowledge, which may influence the success of their work both positively and negatively, and consequently affect the degree of providing the survivors with the appropriate legal, psychological and other kinds of protection.

### *About psychological trauma*

“A psychological trauma is usually defined as an event outside ordinary human experience which poses a threat to life. A traumatic event excludes usual response mechanisms which give people a sense of control, bondage and purposefulness. Traumatic events are not unusual in that they are rare, but rather in that they represent a breakdown of the usual adaptation systems to life circumstances. Intense fear, helplessness, loss of control, fear of destruction are the common denominators of a psychological trauma.”<sup>68</sup>

A single traumatic event may happen in anyone’s life (natural catastrophe, such as an earthquake or a dear person’s death, or a mugger’s assault in the street...). A prolonged, recurrent trauma is found in situations of submissiveness, when a person cannot escape because they are under constant control of an abuser. In that way, a particular abuser-victim relationship based on coercion is created. This situation normally refers to persons involved in the human trafficking chain. “This goes as much for coercion conducted by use of force (....) as for the combination of force, humiliation, and deception”<sup>69</sup>. It is evident that an abuser, or in this case a trafficker, becomes the most powerful person in the survivor’s life, so the survivor’s psychology stems from the acts and beliefs of their trafficker.

The term “trafficking survivor” refers to any person who has been forced to perform certain jobs against their will. Isolation and exclusion are important terms which refer to survivors, and represent control mechanisms of the trafficker who keeps the

67 Judith Lewis Herman, *Trauma and Recovery*, Pandora edition, Basic Books, 1992, p. 7

68 *Ibid.*, p. 33

69 *Ibid.*, p. 74

survivors away from the outside world.<sup>70</sup> **Each person who has survived trafficking has experienced a complex psychological trauma.** A psychological trauma as a survivor's response to a traumatic event will differ from person to person; we will be talking about the factors determining these differences later in the text. At this point, it is important to say that due to difference in responses to human trafficking each survivor must be provided with an individualised professional treatment. In this way one can avoid pitfalls of generalisations and a professional's personal projections about the needs, challenges and capacities of a survivor. This also leads to assistance programmes for survivors being reinforced by real (as opposed to positively or negatively idealised) expectations and planning of steps to be taken by a professional, which are always accompanied by the consent and cooperation of the victim.

### **The most frequent characteristics of a traumatising experience of people who have survived trafficking in persons**

The following characteristics are typical and describe situations from the aspect of a psychological experience faced with by trafficking survivors:

- The event's unpredictability
- Loss of control over the things that happen<sup>71</sup>

Traffickers in persons use the **following mechanisms to control the survivors:**

- **restriction of movement** which exists in all forms of trafficking; in most cases survivors are under the trafficker's control in all aspects of life (food, sleep, hygiene etc.). According to the studies of survivors who have been sexually exploited, "only three per cent of them stated that they had always been free". However, in further interviews it has been noticed that this meant the following: "I have always been free to go wherever I want, of course, in someone's (trafficker's, *translator's note*) escort".<sup>72</sup> Because of a special relationship between the abuser and the survivor, it is common to find a cunning way of control: the victim is given a small portion of money for the sexual services she provides, she is forced to commit petty offences, or use narcotics, or behave in a way which is in complete contrast with her personal beliefs (for example, completely disregarding her religious beliefs). In that way, the survivor starts to feel that she is the only one to blame for the situation she is in; guilt is psychologically transferred from the abuser to the survivor's personality, while a constantly decreasing level of self-respect is starting to make the victim helpless, rendering her ever more dependent: "I don't need a guard, I have my own policeman in my head". Such

<sup>70</sup> Jenny Bjork and Katie Chalk (eds) *10 things you need to know about human trafficking*, World Vision Asia Pacific, 2009, p. 4

<sup>71</sup> Basoglu M. and Mineka S., "The role of uncontrollable and unpredictable stress in post-traumatic stress responses in torture survivors" in *Torture and its Consequences: Current treatment approaches*, M. Basoglu (ed.), 1992

<sup>72</sup> United Nations, *Anti-human trafficking manual for criminal justice practitioners, Module 3 Psychological reactions of victims of trafficking in persons*, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Vienna 2009 [http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/09-80667\\_module3\\_Ebook.pdf](http://www.unodc.org/documents/human-trafficking/09-80667_module3_Ebook.pdf), October, 2009

control leads to growing fears and complete isolation of the victim without the possibility of sharing his/her feelings with anyone.

- **violence** (threats, intimidations, assaults, exposure to dangers) – according to United Nations<sup>73</sup>, around 60 per cent of survivors who have been trafficked for sexual exploitation have experienced violence before trafficking, while 90 per cent of them confirmed to have experienced physical and sexual violence while being trafficked. We should note here that under violence we mean, among other things: exposure to danger (for example speeding and threats to throw a person out of the car while driving on the highway); exposure to viewing other victims' abuse. We are saying this because professionals are sometimes not sensitised enough to understand the devastating effect of indirect violence on the survivor (for example when she witnesses another person's beating or rape).

- **abuse** should be understood in the broadest sense of the word – as psychological abuse, which is contained in other forms of abuse, as well as physical, sexual, and economic. Another form of abuse is when dietary, hygienic and health needs are neglected (for example, procurement of necessary medicines, or failure to treat injuries, or enforced sexual intercourses without protection or while in pregnancy). A threat that members of their families or close friends will be hurt is yet another thing that further weakens the survivor's psyche. The fact that almost more than 90 per cent of survivors come from dysfunctional families and have previously experienced family abuse of various sort and degree, only increases negative effects of abuse which have been later in life experienced from traffickers, prior to or during trafficking (according to the experiences of both group and individual psychodrama therapy, which was carried out in ASTRA Daily Centre since 2007).

Even after they have escaped human trafficking survivors experience abuse (e.g. threats), which is inflicted by the members of criminal trafficking groups. This is contributed to by slow court proceedings in which survivors are often re-traumatised due to inefficient police protection and by their economic dependence in this period (unemployability and inability to resolve housing issues, poor mental and health conditions, stigmatisation by the environment – usually by close family members).

We believe that it is clear from the above mentioned that trafficking in persons is a complex trauma, in which survivors develop certain symptoms as direct consequences of a long-term traumatic experience. On the following pages we will look into the specific symptoms, laying special emphasis on the importance of recognising and understanding these symptoms by professionals, which is a necessary skill that enables adequate contact with the survivors, **the aim of which is to ensure that all the procedures that are carried out are to their benefit.**

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73 *Ibid*

### *Symptoms as a result of traumatization of a complex trauma experienced in trafficking*

“In times of crisis, there are various responses. It is important to know that the emotional response after survived violence is called a violence trauma syndrome and that all that the survivor is experiencing at that time is a normal reaction to an abnormal event. We can identify three stages in responding to a traumatic situation: immediate response, reorganisation/adaptation, and recovery.”<sup>74</sup> This division is important as different symptoms which will be further expounded appear at different stages of responding to a trauma, often combined and always of different intensity.

We will refer back to the following quote because of the importance of understanding how much a traumatic experience harms the survivors: “Dr Bessel van der Kolk demonstrates that the body is from the start involved in the traumatic process. Changes in nervous pathways, data processing of the brain, hormonal balance and autonomous nervous system functions have been demonstrated. Some of them occur as structural changes (...), which gives rise to belief that long-term changes provoked by the imbalance of regulatory functions and increased tension may cause irreversible changes and become a base for increased susceptibility to illnesses and higher death rate in traumatised individuals.”<sup>75</sup>

Considering the fact that human trafficking is a complex trauma involving long-term and intense abuse, the following clusters of negative consequences on the survivors are always observable:

- **physical injuries**
- **acute and chronic somatic diseases**
- **poor mental health in the long run** (emotional problems, psycho-somatic problems, poor social functioning, incidence of graver mental disorders) – according to the statistics of the United Nations, 52 per cent of women have at least 10 symptoms of mental health disorders even 90 days upon the trafficking period. According to the study of the survivors’ experiences, the symptoms matched the intensity of the symptoms of torture.<sup>76</sup>

As regards **physical symptoms**, exhaustion, weight loss, sleeping disorders (insomnia or oversleeping), gastrointestinal problems, immune system disorders, dermatological, genital and venereal, neurological, and sensory disorders, as well as hearing and vision problems etc. are common.<sup>77</sup> The existence of a number of physical

<sup>74</sup> Ivana Slavković (priir) (2009), *Program razvoja dobrih praksi u oblasti nasilja u porodici, Rad sa ženama žrtvama nasilja u porodici, Priručnik*, Autonomni ženski centar, Beograd

<sup>75</sup> Tamara Štajner-Popović i Sverre Varvin (eds) (2002), *Kovitlac: psihoanalitički osvrti na traumu*, IAN, p.175

<sup>76</sup> Ibid, p. 7

<sup>77</sup> Cathy Zimmerman, Mazedza Hossain, Kate Yun, Brenda Roche, Linda Morison and Charlotte Watts, *Stolen Smiles: The*

symptoms further conditions and aggravates the emotional state of survivors (this will be developed further on) especially as professionals will come face-to-face with this cluster of symptoms once they start working with survivors.

### *Mental health symptoms*

The symptoms and conditions appearing in survivors as a result of a traumatic experience of human trafficking are the following: **depression, anxiety, enmity, addictions.**

“Depression is the inability to construct the future”, said Rollo May, an American existential psychologist.<sup>78</sup>

Let us repeat that the state of depression is always accompanied with the feeling of loss, and in most survivors it is a response to losing a whole range of personality aspects, such as important life roles which have been overwhelmed by the imposed role of victim, loss of self-respect, self-image, personal beliefs, and health. There are also the loss of ideals and the feeling that victims are equal to others, that they have the right to support and that they are innocent human beings. Finally, there is a significant loss of faith in true human relations and the right to a future, even to bare life. There is almost always a strong feeling of guilt (especially because it is a direct outcome of the mechanisms of violence used by traffickers in persons). We have been able to perceive almost all of the aforementioned losses in working with the clients at ASTRA Daily Centre. In cases where a burdening impact of the personality structure and disabling life circumstances prior to traumatic events (the already mentioned domestic abuse) existed, the symptoms of depression were more pronounced and, besides psychotherapy, they called for medication in collaboration with the Belgrade Institute for Mental Health and other psychiatric offices. Depression, particularly if not timely treated by using psychotherapy and medicines where necessary, may lead to suicide attempts. Therefore, it is vital that survivors be provided with timely and continuous health care. Regarding depression which is a highly complex emotional disorder, difficulties which at first glance cannot be attributed to depression become noticeable. These are: difficulties in concentration, orientation (both temporal and spatial), drop of motivation, decreased affects, unwillingness, isolation, sometimes difficulties in maintaining one’s hygiene, eating disorders and frequent sleeping disorders, incapacity to forge quality interpersonal relationships, various fears, inability to find employment and hold down a job, difficulties in learning new skills etc. There are also psychosomatic symptoms, such as: dizziness, exhaustion, chest, back and muscle pain, and headache.

Conducting an investigation, followed by the court proceedings which involves social welfare centre will – if the symptoms of depression have been diagnosed in the

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*physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe, op.cit, p. 55*

78 Rollo May, *Love and Will*, 1969, incomplete reference of the publisher

survivor – to a great extent further jeopardize her mental health and general well-being and existence.

### *Anxiety*

Anxiety is an inborn feeling that comes about when a person is facing a threat, danger or when they are under stress. Although a cause of anxiety disorders lies with psychological factors, and although there is evidence on the genetic impact and neurophysiologic grounds for it, research has shown that emotional stress may be a significant factor triggering increased anxiety. On the other hand, the symptoms of anxiety are read from the arousal of the autonomous nervous system caused by intimidating unconscious impulses, fantasies and feelings. If subconscious psychological mechanisms fail to channel anxiety, a person will show signs of generalised unease even for the slightest reason, or they will experience states of unease in the form of bouts of panic. Traumatic situations experienced by the survivors, featuring unpredictability of the event and inability to control what happens, are sure to cause increased anxiety.

According to some research findings<sup>79</sup>, the following symptoms of anxiety have been traced in the survivors: fears, tension, panic and horror attacks, disquietude, and sudden unsettlement without a good reason, irritation, and internal tremor. These symptoms have been measured in the survivors at the first stage of response to trauma, ranging between 67 and 91 per cent.

### *Hostility*

We have already discussed how important it is that the professionals, who are in close contact with a person who has survived human trafficking, understand the behaviour and circumstances surrounding them. It is also important that the knowledge of certain behavioural patterns of survivors should enable appropriate and non-retraumatizing steps to be taken by professionals, as well as decode and control a professional's personal emotional response in these situations.

Hostility as a survivors' response to institutions, as well as non-governmental organizations is encountered for numerous reasons: survivors, by use of a psychological mechanism of negation of their experience (which is functional to psychological survival), feel intrusion when they are pressed to talk about the traumatic event under inadequate circumstances or at an inappropriate time for them. Hostility stems from the loss of confidence in people and institutions, and here we mean not only realistically bad experiences, but also the very impression that professionals and institutions make on survivors. Open hostility speaks about the survivor's subconscious attempt

<sup>79</sup> Cathy Zimmerman, Mazedra Hossain, Kate Yun, Brenda Roche, Linda Morison, and Charlotte Watts, *Stolen smiles: a summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe*, op.cit.p.9

to protect themselves from new traumatization, as this has been one of the ways that has helped them come through a complex trauma caused by human trafficking. All survivor's beliefs are broken down and it is extremely difficult to forge new and quality relationships. For example, there is a need for revenge as a psychological response to trauma; institutions often degrade survivors by acting from the position of power and holding survivors in further submission, treating them as less valuable persons who have no voice of their own, attitudes and decisions; in other words, institutions stigmatise survivors. Unfortunately, this behaviour is not far from what can be found in some non-governmental organisations.

Real threats of traffickers do not cease during long and unpredictable police and court proceedings, so survivors, out of fear for their nearest and dearest as well as for themselves, and because of the lack of organised full protection, refuse to testify or participate in proceedings, afraid of possible retribution.

The following symptoms of unfriendly behaviour should be fully appreciated within the context of the instinctive reaction of the most survivors and you, as professionals, need to find an appropriate personal response so as not to endanger the rights of survivors or your own rights: "the need to hit or hurt someone; throwing and smashing things; proneness to conflict; short fuse, low tolerance to frustration, oversensitivity; bouts of anger without external provocation, which are difficult to control". Measured in survivors at the first stage of response to trauma, these symptoms have ranged between 36 and 83 per cent.

### *Addictive illnesses*

In the course of traumatic experience survivors have been forced to take psychoactive substances, alcohol and/or drugs or were taking these willingly. These substances can temporarily reduce fear and pain, both emotional and physical. Besides, the forced use of narcotics enables further control that human traffickers have over survivors. The addiction that is being developed becomes not only a mental but physical disease with permanent detrimental effects on the survivor's health. It is vital that the survivor be provided with timely treatment of their addictions. In addition, abstinence is inevitable before the initiation of certain investigative and court procedures.

### *Post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)*

PTSD will be mentioned briefly because of theoretical and practical complexity of this phenomenon and the lack of space in this article. However, we think it is important for professionals to have the basic knowledge about PTSD as there is a high percentage of survivors living with this syndrome.

Traumatic experience associated with PTSD should meet the following criteria: a person has experienced, witnessed or has been faced with an event which is threatening

to life or physical integrity of the person or others; the person's reactions include feelings of intense fear, helplessness and terror.

In persons suffering from PTSD, the traumatic experience they have survived is consistently reoccurring in the form of certain symptoms: intrusive, troubling memories of the event which appear under the guise of images, thoughts or perceptions, terrible nightmares of the event, feelings as if the frightening event were happening again, which occur in wide-awake or intoxicated conditions and manifest themselves through illusions, hallucinations or flashback episodes of the traumatic event, external or internal reminders of the trauma which lead to reawakening of the feelings or behaviours associated with the traumatic event.

"The person loses interest in all the activities they used to love doing, invests enormous efforts in order to avoid thoughts, feelings or people who remind them of the trauma, very often being incapable of remembering some important aspects and parts of the traumatic event; they feel different and estranged from close people in their lives, sometimes they do not feel love and affection to once close members of their families or friends. The person has got a feeling that they have been denied a future, as if they had no right to ordinary and normal life. One of the frequent symptoms of PTSD is a feeling that the very person or the world around them is not real (depersonalisation/de-realisation)"<sup>80</sup>.

All these symptoms prevent a person from psychological and social functioning.

#### *Survivors' susceptibility to PTSD*

There have been many attempts to determine the factors indicating to a predisposition of the appearance of PTSD. According to studies, "these findings suggest that persons with relatively good mental health prior to trauma record the lowest risk of PTSD. However, if the traumatic experience has been frightening enough, the previous sound psychological health will probably not be able to prevent the syndrome."<sup>81</sup>

According to some other findings, the lack of social support when most needed may also cause a psychologically healthy person to give in to trauma.

<sup>80</sup> Bojana Živanović, *O PTSD*, [http://ptsps.ba/index2.php?option=com\\_content&do\\_pdf=1&id=46](http://ptsps.ba/index2.php?option=com_content&do_pdf=1&id=46)

<sup>81</sup> Solomon Z., Dekel R., Mikulincer M., *Complex trauma of war captivity: a prospective study of attachment and post-traumatic stress disorder*, *Psychological medicine* 2008; 38(10):1427-34.

### *PTSD dynamics*

The course of PTSD does not have a great deal of consistency. According to findings of the research on the conditions of women who have survived human trafficking, “the initial interview at the stage of immediate response to trauma has shown that 56 per cent of women report on symptoms indicating PTSD. After the third interview, at the recovery stage, this percentage is reduced to 6 per cent, which once more proves how important expert assistance and counselling are. However, despite a significant decrease in PTSD incidence, the disorder might come back again, especially in the future highly stressful life situations.”<sup>82</sup>

### *Recommendations*

Here is what we recommend when you are in touch with persons who have survived a trauma of trafficking in persons:

#### *Physical aspect*

Provide comfortable rooms for conversation with the survivor.

Make sure that the survivor can get refreshments and food.

Provide a professional and sensitised interpreter if the survivor does not speak or has a poor knowledge of the official language (this particularly refers to the Roma population, as well as to foreigners).

Make sure that the survivor has smoking breaks.

Be flexible about the duration of conversations with the survivor, but at the beginning try together with them to agree on a suggested time for a conversation (we recommend a 45-minute session, which could be extended for breaks). Too long conversations may exhaust the survivor and affect your achievement.

Do not stop the conversation in order to do other business however important that might be (for instance, answering the phone).

#### *Procedures*

Embrace examples of good practice from the region and other countries; develop your own good practices which will grow into standard procedures of dealing with the survivors in all cases instead of being used in ad hoc situations.

Design procedures inside the organisation/institution on the exchange of the information gathered on the team about the survivor, so that she does not have to

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<sup>82</sup> Cathy Zimmerman, Mazedra Hossain, Kate Yun, Brenda Roche, Linda Morison, and Charlotte Watts, *Stolen smiles: a summary report on the physical and psychological health consequences of women and adolescents trafficked in Europe*, op.cit. p. 23

give the same statements all over again; avoid conversations if the survivor is going through an acute stage of her trauma (the stage of immediate reactions to shock) and if the survivor is ill or states that she cannot participate in the procedures at that point in time.

Insist on using legally approved and technically manageable measures for the protection of survivors while testifying – use of video footages and web-cam testimonies. By doing this you will protect the survivor from re-traumatization.

Be very careful about the survivor's safety and always check with her if she feels safe enough to take part in the procedures that you are suggesting. Keep an active collaboration with other organisations/institutions which are obliged to ensure the survivor's safety in the course of the process she is taking part in.

### **Complexity of a relationship between the survivors on one side and service providers on the other – the significance of the two-side relationship**

#### *Attitude to the survivor*

Always bear in mind that the survivor is a human being, who is not exclusively defined by their role of victim. Respect the survivors and make point of this whenever you can, emphasising the fact that you are there to support them.

Each person is unique so you should create an individual approach because by doing this you will avoid generalisations in your work, while the survivor will get a more adequate support.

Respect the principle of discretion, especially if your professional role does not oblige you to share the information you have gathered on the survivor with other organisations/institutions (counselling offices, health services, social welfare centres, solicitors, educational institutions, NGOs).

Listen closely to the survivor, pay attention to non-verbal communication, remember what was it that had negatively affected the person in front of you when asking them to recollect a detail, recount their impressions of violence etc.

Believe the survivor. A suspecting and arrogant approach or giving excuses for violence (even if this is done indirectly) is not an adequate approach in working with the survivor. Do not be judgmental of the survivor if she is suffering from an addictive illness, as this is a consequence of her traumatic experience, but make sure that she gets professional treatment instead.

Remember that the survivor has the right to decide about everything that is related to her present and future; consult her while planning protection measures, and implement them only if the person agrees with them. If you would like to contact the

survivor's family, you should do so only with the survivor's approval, because the survivor's family members may be traffickers themselves.

Do not use power over the survivor, which can stem from your position, organisation/institution, knowledge, financial security, image of yourself as a professional – even when you think that you are totally right and that you are working in the best interest of the survivor. Try at least for a second to put yourself in the survivor's shoes.

Do not make any promises which you are not sure you can keep.

Provide the survivor with psychological and psychotherapeutic support which is the key to reintegration.

#### *Support to professionals in organizations/institutions*

Do not forget that you, too, are a human being regardless of your important professional role. This means that you have the right to react emotionally, have personal beliefs, and even prejudices. But none of these should jeopardize the survivor's well-being, which might happen if you react and make decisions out of affection, from a personal point of view, based on prejudices which you may not be aware of.

Hostility that the survivors may demonstrate towards you is a traumatic reaction (remember what was said in the section about the symptoms) so do not take them to heart. Also, check if there are any realistic grounds for the feeling of hostility which the survivor is harbouring at that moment towards the organisation/institution, your colleagues or yourself.

Work in a team and exchange feelings and dilemmas. Thus you will avoid or lessen secondary traumatization which you could experience because you are in a certain way exposed to the traumatic experience while listening to and working with survivors.

#### *Support to professionals working as consultants on SOS hotline support programs for trafficking survivors*

We would like to refer once again to the already mentioned processes happening in a consultant-survivor relationship: each SOS consultant has her own *system of values* which is a set of beliefs deeply rooted in one's personality. The value system is built from an early childhood as a person grows up, and it is marked by a culture that a person lives in. The value system is mostly unconscious.

For this reason, it is important that a consultant is continually reminded that her value system need not, and most often cannot concur with the value system of the survivor, which she finds to be true and feels obliged to defend; some value systems of the survivor, which have been discussed so far, are in direct opposition with the

usual value attitudes (e.g. “women must put up with things and remain faithful to men, whatever they do”). The consultant is obliged to respect the survivor’s value system, without attacking it, but offering alternative solutions and thus paving the path of change.

In consultations of SOS operators and trafficking survivors, *consultants’ feelings* are one of the essential working tools. When having a role of consultant, a person must follow their own emotional reactions to what the survivor is communicating (verbally or through silence). The consultant’s emotional reaction in the form of counter-transfer may appear because of their personal life experience or as an empathic reaction of being overwhelmed with emotions which is induced by the survivor’s experience at the moment when she is sharing them with an operator on the SOS phone. If the degree of the survivor’s traumatization is extremely high – reactive, counter-transfer feelings of a consultant may have characteristics of the secondary traumatization on the consultant (which emerges when we are directly or indirectly witnessing violence towards others).

*Expectations of SOS consultants from their clients*, i.e. survivors must be realistic in order to avoid a situation when personal and often unrealistic expectations stemming from the “saviour’s role” are projected, which in turn incites the survivor’s anger (if she fails to live up to the consultant’s expectations however useful and pragmatic these may be) and disrupts the possibility to get a realistic perspective on the current capacities and readiness for change of each individual client.

*Consultants’ personal boundaries* – “boundaries refer to one’s experience and image of oneself as a separate and whole being in the world”<sup>83</sup>. In any type of consultancy, especially when working with victims of human trafficking, due to the fact that violence is a grave form of breaking into personal boundaries, it is highly important that helpers take special care of preserving and protecting their own, as well as their clients’ boundaries.

Concrete steps for establishing and preserving boundaries in consultancy relations are as follows: present possibilities and restrictions of consultancy on SOS hotline, decide on dynamics and duration of sessions/SOS conversations (except in cases of emergencies), respect clients as being equal partners in the joint efforts to overcome traumatic experiences, respect client’s autonomy in making decisions individually, and keep away from imposing solutions and advice, but rather work actively towards finding alternatives.

83 Ogden P. in: Edita Ostojić et al.(2003). *Priručnik za pomagače i pomagačice koji rade sa žrtvama i preživjelim nasilja*, treće izdanje, Medica – Infoteka, Zenica, p. 119

*Supervision and intravision – organised expert support to SOS hotline consultants*

**Supervision** implies a structured and regular reflection on an expert's work, which is organised individually with a supervisor or in a small group lead by a supervisor. A supervisor is an independent expert who helps consultants in performing their job of assisting people through the analysis of actions and planning goals and tasks, but at the same time he/she offers support to consultants so that they can deal in an appropriate way with their feelings and problems which may occur in their relationship with clients, other professionals and the system in general.

It is important to distinguish between supervision and reviews. Review is an assessment process of work from the point of view of control and oversight, while supervision is a process of supporting and assisting consultants which goes hand in hand with the respect of discretion rules regarding supervision sessions, well-intendedness and mutual respect of persons participating in supervision.

Well-organised supervision increases the quality of professional work and reduces the margin of error, at the same time decreasing the risk of professional stress, loss of motivation to work, secondary traumatization and burnout of professionals which frequently occurs in assistance work.

**Intravision** is a support group of consultants who gather at certain times and as frequently as they agree, which makes it different from team exchanges and ad hoc discussions. This group has no supervisor to lead it; leadership is a matter of agreement among the members. Intravision group's goal is to create a safe and appreciative space for consultants' discussions on their work with clients and finding the best solutions, but the group also provides emotional support to consultants working with survivors in order to overcome complex feelings which may appear in the process and in this respect it has almost the same goals as supervision.

Intravision group work as well as individual supervision should be confidential, which in practice means that the content discussed in an intravision group's session (thoughts, feelings, dilemmas) is not revealed to the public.





## Chapter 3

### SOS HOTLINES AND ACCOMPANYING PROGRAMS

In the majority of organizations that run SOS hotline intended for (potential) trafficking victims, various programs have been developed that supplement the work of telephone service. When a call is received, the assistance usually does not end with the end of the conversation, but it actually begins, either if it concerns search for potential victims or their reintegration. In this manual, our colleagues from La Strada Moldova, an organization which has a Drop-In centre in addition to the SOS hotline, try to give an answer to the question what is going on after the SOS call. After that, our colleagues from Open Gate – La Strada Macedonia describe the work of their SOS service and the shelter. In the end, we present the work of ASTRA Daily Center.

#### 3.1. Hotline as an important means in facilitation of assistance to trafficked persons - experience of La Strada Moldova



Author: Viktoria Dochițcu

##### ***Why does La Strada manage a Hotline?***

Although recent years were marked by appearance and existence of diverse sources of public information – still, ever since the day when the telephone was first invented, it is telephone service that remains amongst the most solicited means of information. And that is because phone communication is highly accessible and most handy for everyone. Besides comfort of use it also offers a totally different option of having a chance to discuss an issue and maintain a dialogue with a specialist or counsellor as compared to learning some information from mass media.

Proper set up of telephone service determines at large the efficiency of activities performed by an agency. Since the very onset of its activity the International Center for Women Rights Protection and Promotion “La Strada” proposed as objective prevention and countering human trafficking in the Republic of Moldova, including through launching of telephone service. Thus, the Hotline service appeared as a result of pressing need existent at the moment. Labour migration was taking large proportions; people were leaving overseas for making money being uninformed and often falling easy prey into the hands of individuals lining their pockets on the account of

exploitation in humans. By means of Hotline persons desiring to leave overseas were advised on taking correct decision while the ones trapped in trafficking were saved from the yoke of slavery. Reaching now its 8 years of activity it is not just enough to say that the Hotline remains amongst most paramount necessities for the population and a very important instrument for countering human trafficking. The Hotline continues to be the source of information and immediate assistance to persons finding themselves in a deadlock, remaining at the same time the first line of direct interaction with a person in need of help regardless of the actual location of this person – in the country or overseas. Obviously, such a service once well arranged serves to facilitate beneficiaries' access to the desired assistance.

In recent years, phenomenon of trafficking in human beings acquires a large scope in the international community. Governments of many countries, international, and non-governmental organizations develop the corresponding programs, strategies, and legislation as to combat trafficking in people. The International Center for Women Rights Protection and Promotion "La Strada" is one of such organizations in the Republic of Moldova. The Center includes three departments: Resource Center, Drop-in Center and Analytical and Legal Department. The Hotline service in Moldova operates since September 2001 with a phone number for international calls (**0037322**) **23 33 09** and, since 2003 the toll-free access for callers (within the territory of the Republic of Moldova) to the same service of Hotline have been possible while calling to phone number **0 800 77777**. The Hotline of La Strada Center is an important tool for the work of all internal departments:

- Resource Center for potential migrants receive all necessary information about the trips abroad
- Drop-in Center: the information about cases of trafficking in people is streamlined through the Hotline thus interfering with SOS component for trafficking cases
- Analytical and Legal Department: all new information coming to the Hotline such as new trends in trafficking mechanism, migration tendencies, etc., are an object of research interest and stay in basis for further activities of La Strada Center including releasing specialized publications for professionals in the counter-trafficking field.

In September 2009, the Hotline celebrated its 8th anniversary. During these eight years, numerous changes have been introduced as to adapt to the needs of the callers and improve the quality of provided services. Initially, the Hotline regime operated only several hours per day, shifted soon to twenty-four-hour basis till recently when working daily regime changed to 8 a.m-8 p.m. Since September 1, 2001 till November 25, 2009, over **29 100** calls have been consulted via Hotline of La Strada Moldova Center.

## The Hotline Mission is counter-acting trafficking in persons through:

- Familiarization of potential migrants with aspects of safe migration, hazards of trafficking in people, and illegal migration-related risks;
- Information and assistance in case of trafficking in people (primary identification, identification of needs, handover of trafficking in people case to the Drop-in- Center);
- Analysis and monitoring of the problem (i.e., data collection and issuing reports on the new aspects of the problem).

The **beneficiaries** are identified arising from the mission of the respective organization as well as by the scope pursued by the Hotline. Once identified, we should proceed to setting the algorithm of counselling for each type of beneficiaries. Practically speaking we need to answer the question: "Who can call the Hotline?" By grouping responses we will get the categories of beneficiaries. Thus, the following persons could be the beneficiaries of telephone service which pursues the scope of anti-trafficking through promotion of secure migration and facilitation of access to adequate assistance in cases of human trafficking:

- *potential migrants*, i.e. persons soliciting information about going overseas;
- *emigrants*, i.e. persons that have already left overseas but have questions on legalization of their status, family reunion, etc.;
- *trafficked persons*, regardless of the scope of exploitation as well as their relatives and close ones;
- *occupational groups* (representatives of mass media, didactic staff, social workers, medical staff, representatives of law enforcement authorities, international organizations, NGO's, etc.), which rather often solicit information referred to such phenomena as migration and human trafficking (statistics, specialized literature, etc.).

Setting clear scope, lines of activity and beneficiaries will allow the counsellors operating Hotline to understand *what* and *how* to act, for *whom* they are doing their job and which is their mandate/purpose.<sup>84</sup>

Counselling via the phone presumes to respect some specific work principles. Each telephone service which is used for the work with subscribers has its own principles, regardless of the specifics of work. To provide efficient consulting, regardless of the specifics of subscriber's/victims' question, the consultant has to respect the basic

<sup>84</sup> *The Practical Guide to Telephone-Based Counselling*, La Strada Moldova, Chisinau, 2008. [http://www.lastrada.md/publicatii/ebook/Identific\\_eng.pdf](http://www.lastrada.md/publicatii/ebook/Identific_eng.pdf)

principles of this type of activity. As for La Strada Moldova, Hotline service respects the following *principles of consulting*:

- **Anonymity and Confidentiality**, i.e. information, obtained from subscriber, does not leave the organization.
- **Individual Approach** – i.e. consultant should provide consulting to all subscribers, without disapproving subscriber's personality.
- **Accessibility of Hotline**, i.e. consultant should be ready to solve the issue or provide the requested information regardless of when subscriber is calling.
- **Impartial responsibility** i.e. consultant should be aware of the limits of her competencies while the caller should be responsible for making decision on solving her/his problem.

Moreover, the work principles applicable to Hotline counselling should always guide telephone conversation in favour of the beneficiary.

The Hotline consultant during telephone conversation should bear in mind a series of personal security measures, so named *security rules*:

- Never divulge counsellor's name – this should be substituted with a nickname.
- Never talk about yourself.
- Never make any arrangements to meet with the caller.
- Never disclose the Hotline or organisation's address.
- It is inadmissible under any circumstances to take photos of counsellor's face.

Conscious and thorough observance of consulting principles and security rules, besides ensuring safety and reliability of the parties engaged in the process of telephone counselling also guarantees, to a large extent, the success of Hotline, contributing to the integrity of furnishing professional counselling and at the end of the day to the image and prestige of the organization. The experience gained over more than eight years of Hotline activity conducted by the International Center La Strada Moldova proves exhaustively the validity of these affirmations.

#### *How does SOS component of Hotline work?*

One of the objective of Hotline is to facilitate the access of trafficked persons to adequate assistance, thus in this way we call it SOS Hotline when it deals with calls related to assistance to trafficked persons.

As it was mentioned before the SOS Hotline receives SOS calls both from victims and their relatives, identifies cases of trafficking in persons and adopts necessary measures targeted to provide assistance and protection to victims of trafficking. The Hot-

line consultant who receives such calls should have special knowledge on identification of trafficked persons, rules of communication with victims as well as the general procedure of actions that should be carried out while rendering assistance. During eight years of activity La Strada Moldova Hotline has helped hundreds of trafficked persons. Often, this communication channel is the only one which allows our fellow-citizens subjected to exploitation abroad to get connection with their native country and receive the necessary assistance including rescuing from the place of exploitation.

There are several specific *steps* in organization of assistance to victims of human trafficking through the Hotline:

#### *Preliminary identification of the trafficked persons*

Identification of beneficiaries plays a special role amongst the responsibilities of the counsellor: besides the informational assistance furnished to the beneficiaries there should also be a more ample package of services available to the (presumed) trafficked person, and the counsellor often plays a role of the intermediate while contacting the resource organisations and facilitating access to the needed assistance. Thus, identification of trafficked persons that have suffered from human trafficking is important from the standpoint of human rights, since the person who is presumed to be a victim of trafficking should have access to the assistance. A counsellor who receives the calls from the presumed trafficked person should possess special knowledge in regard to identification of such persons, to be familiar with the rules of communication with the traumatised persons as well as to be able to undertake actions covering the immediate needs of the caller. This process of communication with (presumed) trafficked persons is rather complicated, especially in the crisis situations, and requires special training as well as extensive experience in the domain. The identification itself could take place during:

- the process of communication with the (presumed) trafficked person;
- the process of communication with a third person (with trafficked person's relative, with a governmental structure, NGO engaged in facilitating access to the needed help to this person, etc.).

In the process of preliminary identification of trafficked persons the Hotline counsellor should be guided by the core regulatory acts –the *Protocol to prevent, suppress and punish trafficking in persons, especially of women and children*, supplementing the UN Convention against translational organized crime (also known to the specialists as Palermo Protocol), *Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in human beings* signed on 16 May 2005 in Warsaw and the *Law of the Republic of Moldova Nr. 241-XVI as of October 20, 2005 on Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings* as well as by the Criminal Code of the Republic of Moldova. The Law on

Prevention and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings besides the definitions (the knowledge of which, undoubtedly, is an obligation of a counsellor operating a Hotline) includes also the definition of the *victim of trafficking in human beings* (natural person who was presumed or identified as such subject to trafficking action) and of *identification of the victim of human trafficking* as a process. Besides, we make use of practical experience accumulated by the International Center La Strada in identification of trafficked persons published in the own specialized edition.<sup>85</sup>

#### *Assessment of needs experienced by the trafficked persons*

Once the case is preliminary identified the counsellor proceeds to assessment of the paramount needs experienced by the (presumed) trafficked person and arranges the assistance. Usually the needed assistance provided by La Strada Moldova staff (directly or via referral) could be categorized according to four main stages:

- Assistance at recuperation from the place of exploitation (with the help of partners in the destination countries);
- Pre-repatriation assistance (temporary shelter, medical and psychological assistance, clothing, etc.);
- Repatriation assistance (obtaining repatriation document, covering cost of transportation, meeting at the airport, etc.);
- Post-repatriation assistance, including rehabilitation and reintegration (accommodations, medical and psychological assistance, humanitarian aid, professional training, employment, etc.).

Social assistance services in Moldova could be provided by the state structures, non-governmental and intergovernmental structures in the framework of projects and programs having their activity targeted towards vulnerable categories of persons including trafficked persons. Since trafficking in human being is a transnational phenomenon, it is important to ensure efficient cooperation and communication of the competent authorities not only on national level, but also transnational cooperation with partners in the countries of destination, transit and origin. One of the tasks of Hotline service in Moldova is to gather and up-date the Hotline's Data Base of the nationally and internationally based organisations specialized in different spheres of assistance that may be eventually provided to Hotline callers. Usually in the countries of destination there are two or three types of assistance that are mostly requested while in the countries of origin a variety of social services exist and are provided just upon citizens' repatriation.

<sup>85</sup> *Identification of the trafficked persons in Moldova. Recommendations for specialized NGO acting in the Republic of Moldova*, La Strada Moldova, Chisinau, 2006. Could be downloaded at: [http://www.lastrada.md/publicatii/ebook/Identific\\_eng.pdf](http://www.lastrada.md/publicatii/ebook/Identific_eng.pdf)

The SOS component of Hotline service in Moldova proved also to be a useful tool for the trafficked person's post-repatriation statuses monitoring. Since trafficked persons use to gain trust in the counsellors who helped them in the critical situations, they often call as to tell their problems they face at the local level but also their successes. Often they call just to speak out, to get a moral support - it would seem simple but extremely important service and often inexistent in the rural regions. The toll-free option is quite helpful since the majority of trafficked persons could not afford the phone conversation costs. In this way, the Hotline counsellor plays the role of a real counsellor trying to stabilize the emotional status of the beneficiary, help to identify the current/urgent needs and facilitate assistance to the available services. Yet, the most difficult part is related to the balancing between immediate facilitated access to assistance and beneficiaries' dependence of the service providers. That is why the Hotline counsellors pay a huge attention in communication with beneficiaries to their empowerment.

Provided that post-repatriation assistance is mostly a long process where Hotline staff often plays a role of intermediate between beneficiaries and service providers (and specifically, work in direct contact with social workers from Drop-in Center while covering the needs), then intervention in the urgent situations like rescuing from the place of exploitation or crisis situations is a prerogative of the Hotline counsellors. Rather often the promptness of assistance to be provided via Hotline directly influences the beneficiary's destiny, health and even life. Only those responsible, decisive and plenty of gumption Hotline counsellors can properly face and deal with SOS situations.

#### *What is Drop-in Center?*

Identification and facilitation of assistance to the (presumed) trafficked persons is a noble yet a time consuming task. The Hotline counsellors work very closely with staff of the specialized unit within La Strada Moldova Center whose main task is to deal directly, mainly at the stage of post-repatriation assistance, with trafficked persons/ their relatives and local service providers as to assure that all categories of beneficiaries get a qualitative and in-time assistance. Even persons who addressed the Hotline and finally have not been identified as trafficked persons often require some urgent assistance that could not be ignored. The Drop-in Center social worker and psychologist are those who deal "in-vivo" with beneficiaries and service providers specialized in rehabilitation, reintegration but also who intermediates in the process of accessing justice (cases when trafficked persons express their wish to testify against traffickers) as to assure that the beneficiary's rights are respected and protected. The Drop-in Center and National Hotline proved to be an important link in the *National Referral System for victims and potential victims of trafficking in human beings for provision of assistance and protection* that have been institutionalized in Moldova, where governmental, non-governmental and international organisations cooperate closely in

identification, assistance and protection of these persons<sup>86</sup>. The specifics of the needs of a trafficked person are such that not a single structure can cover all possible needs, monitor and manage with the issues independently; inter-departmental and interdisciplinary approach is necessary to solve the issue. Thus, the Drop-in Center works mainly via partnerships/referrals to the national actors, yet there are some limited possibilities to provide in-kind help directly to beneficiaries, like humanitarian aid, etc. The Drop-in Center staff often plays a role of a “mobile team” moving to distant places, along with state social worker of other specialists as to meet with beneficiaries, identify the needs, provide in-kind help etc.

The Drop-in Center’s mission is to promote the protection of the trafficked persons’ rights, to ensure transparency and quality of the provided services thus contributing to the consolidation of national capacity for counteracting trafficking in human beings including via cooperation between governmental organizations, NGOs and other actors.

Thus, the *beneficiaries* of the Drop-in Center are:

- At primary level – trafficked persons and their families,
- At secondary level – professional groups working with trafficked persons and service providers on both national and international level (social workers, psychologists, doctors, lawyers, police etc.), since the staff is also actively involved in the capacity building programs.

In this way, there could be mentioned the following **capacities** for the Drop-in Center:

- **National SOS Hotline** – a component that allows trafficked persons to stay in direct contact with Drop-in Center staff;
- A **mobile team** which provides assistance in identifying the victims of human trafficking, evaluation of risks and necessities, direct assistance to the victims (jointly with Hotline counsellors - organisation of repatriation, meeting at the place of arrival, etc.), referring to other organizations which provide special assistance / escorting to the place of providing the assistance services (accommodation, medical, juridical, psychological assistance etc.), providing specialized psychological assistance to minors victims of trafficking (assistance during the process of interrogation in criminal proceedings, crisis intervention etc.);
- **Emergency assistance fund** (humanitarian assistance, etc.);
- **Professional capacity building programs/training modules/didactic materials** – for social workers, teachers, policemen, etc.;

<sup>86</sup> La Strada Moldova, “National Referral Mechanism for Assistance and Protection of Trafficked Persons”, *La Strada Express* Issue no. 1, February 2005

- **Up-dated Data Bases on national and international service providers**

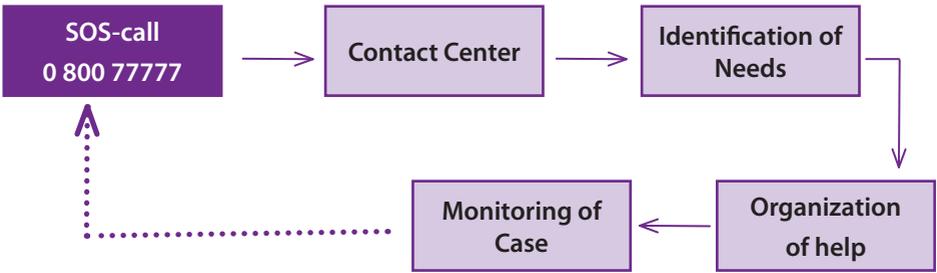
*How does Drop-in Center work?*

The main objective of social assistance rendered to the trafficked persons is to support these people (and their family members), observing human rights as to reestablish psychological balance, health, development of abilities with a view of reintegration, as well as to provide a person the possibility to ensure a decent life in the future.

Specifically, the specialists from Drop-in Center provide social assistance to trafficked persons in the following **aspects**:

- Identification of trafficking cases and associated activities (evaluation of risks and necessities, maintaining the contact with the beneficiaries, including via partner-organizations);
- Assistance in the process of organizing the rescuing from the place of exploitation;
- Assistance prior to repatriation to the victim and her child, in case of its birth in the destination country (immediate accommodation, medical services and emergency psychological counselling, food products, clothing etc.);
- Assistance in repatriation (facilitation in getting the necessary documents, organization of escorting during the trip to the country of origin in cases of minors or in due to the status of beneficiary; travel arrangements etc.);
- Post-repatriation assistance (social support, organization of temporary accommodation, medical, psychological assistance, psycho-social assistance including for family members, legal assistance, professional orientation and training etc.);
- Informational support to Hotline staff (search of missing persons suspected to be victims of trafficking, including contact with families of trafficking victims), informational support to trafficked persons who apply for the residence status in the country of destination (often in partnership with La Strada partners-members of the European network against trafficking in human beings from those eight countries of South-Eastern Europe).

As could be deduced from above, the Hotline service has a very tight and interlacing activity with the Drop-in-Center staff. Being close to each other, these two services work in the consistent way as to protect the interests of the trafficked persons. The special mechanism of communication and shearing of info is built as to assure the effectiveness of interventions and management aspects. The following general scheme reflects the cooperation of Hotline and Drop-in Center units while dealing with trafficking cases:



It's worthy to add that Drop-in Centre's staff respects the following **principles** while working directly with the beneficiaries:

- Confidentiality and privacy
- Non-discriminatory attitude
- Individual approach
- Unconditional access to assistance services

If speaking about general **stages of work with beneficiaries** (trafficked persons) of Drop-in Center staff, these could be classified as follows:

- **First contact (meeting, telephone conversation, letter)**

The main objective is to establish the contact, inspire self-confidence and give encouragement to the beneficiary. The possible places of meeting with victims include:

- specialized asylum,
- trafficked person's place of residence (if preferred/chosen by beneficiary), or
- other place, which predisposes the trafficked person for communication and is trustful.
- **Interview**

The main objective is to study the beneficiary's state, highlight the current problems, and develop a joint plan of rehabilitation and reintegration. The Drop-in Center staff does its best as assure during the interviews:

- with the help of verbal and non-verbal communication, create for the interviewed person such an atmosphere, in which this person will feel self-confident, comfortable, safe; minimum questions are asked (the interview's duration de-

pend on beneficiary's physical and psychic condition, on the necessity of urgent intervention etc.);

- the urgent needs and necessities are identified first (for example, medical assistance);
- interview should not take place in the presence of the third persons (except for cases, when the interviewed person insists on that).
- **Organization of social assistance for trafficked persons and their family members**

Assistance is provided regardless of age, nationality, sex, material or psychic status. If the beneficiary is referred to a competent organization, the social worker should make sure that the organization or specialist, to whom the beneficiary is being referred, has training in this sphere, is familiar with principles and crucial moments during provision of assistance to such category of beneficiaries, and observes certain rules and pre-defined principles of behaviour and communication.

Social assistant should tell the interviewed person about the types of services, which are available to this person, and organize it by contacting a concrete service provider/escorting the beneficiary.

Social worker's **general rules** of work with trafficked persons include:

- All types of activity of the social worker in terms of provision of assistance to the trafficked persons should be directed to maximal development of abilities, moral and volitional characteristics of these persons, motivating them to act independently.
- Avoiding situations, which make the trafficked person talk about how she became object of trafficking in persons.
- Accepting all emotions and feelings of the beneficiary such as they are (aggressiveness, depression, fear). If necessary, the beneficiary is delicately referred to a psychologist/psychotherapist, or other specialist.
- Manifesting confidence towards everything the trafficked person is saying.
- Being in permanent contact with the beneficiary, particularly during the first month after repatriation; a special emphasis is put on moral support.
- Avoiding giving a concrete advice to beneficiary; the beneficiary should make by herself/himself.
- Respecting the decisions adopted by the trafficked person (even in cases of assistance refusal).

- Inspiring the beneficiary with certainty, which is necessary for overcoming all difficulties related to the period of rehabilitation.
- **Social support and monitoring of victim's status**
- Monitoring of the state /problem/ needs of the beneficiary, minimum 6 months after coming back to the motherland. Usually, as a result of successful rehabilitation, the victim is able to independently solve her problems minimum one year after repatriation.
- Request information about the victim's state from your partners, who are involved in provision of social assistance.<sup>87</sup>

An important moment and dilemma existing in every organization that deals with assisting trafficked persons and confidential information is how to proceed in storage, exchanges and administration of the data. "La Strada" Moldova Center respects the provisions of the Moldovan Law № 17-XVI as of February 15, 2007. Respecting the principles of confidentiality, no personal data are transferred without written approval of the beneficiary. Since the collection of the data about trafficking cases via Hotline or Drop-in Center staff is done targeting statistical or research aims, such information is depersonalized.

Currently in the Republic of Moldova only the International Center La Strada has a national Hotline that plays a role of informing potential emigrants and facilitating access to trafficked persons. The trafficked persons are welcomed if not to say - urged to call the Hotline as to get the needed assistance. Hotline proved to be an effective tool in linking trafficked persons with service providers irrespectively of their geographical location. The paramount issue in working with trafficked persons is not only the necessity to have a specific trainings in the field but also a practical experience, including in identifying cases of trafficking that could be a real challenge in the situation of the "mutating" phenomena of trafficking in human beings. Thus, combining the aspects of counselling and data collection proved to be the most effective one in assuring the qualitative, counselling and direct, assistance to (presumed) victims of trafficked as well as to the potential ones. In fact the services provided by Hotline as well as the Drop-in Center should non-stop as to assure access to counselling and assistance during 24-hour basis that made La Strada Moldova to adopt both services to the beneficiaries needs. Additionally, all international contacts made during the international events are built on mutual trust and best experience, all these assure that our beneficiaries get the qualified and prompt assistance, and that they are in the centre of attention of all counter-trafficking actors involved.

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87 *Social assistance to trafficked persons, especially to women*, International Center La Strada Moldova Chisinau, 2005

## 3.2. Open Gate – La Strada Macedonia



*Author: Biljana Jovanovska*

### 1. About the Organization

Due to the fragility of the circumstances which the victims of trafficking in human beings undergo, and at the same time, the wish to decrease that level through prevention, in 2002, the Open Gate decided to increase its role in society through another service, necessary for the needs of the people. At the same time, the frequent phone calls in the organization regarding the interest in trafficking in human beings, reports of human trafficking or the calls of victims of human trafficking, have sent a clear signal for the necessity of another SOS line that would mainly prevent, advise and inform the citizens about the trafficking in human beings and would also be of public interest and a service to the citizens. That is why, in 2002, the Open Gate opened the first and only SOS line for help regarding matters of trafficking in human beings, applicable for all citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

The SOS line had its first course with 12 working hours, Monday to Friday that would rapidly increase to working hours during weekends and holidays. After two and a half years of work, it was concluded that the SOS service has to be active 24 hours, so on June 1<sup>st</sup> 2005, this working time was employed. It is noticeable that from the establishment of the SOS line, the frequency of the calls is annually increased at a small level. Due to the unawareness of the existence of this line, in the beginning of the year 2002, there was a small number of calls.

The Open Gate finds that the reason for the increase in the calls throughout the years lies in the amplified familiarity with the existence of this line and the possibilities that it offers. The media coverage holds the greatest impact regarding the frequency of the phone calls. Furthermore, the articles and the reports regarding human trafficking in the media also had a great impact on the frequency of calls in the SOS line.

Analyzing the frequency of calls in 2007 and 2008, it can be established that most of the calls take up the midday hours, i.e. from 10 am to 2 pm. The rate of the rest of the calls is consistent during the rest of the day and night.

From what we have practiced by now, we would emphasize that the number of victims assisted during the night is not big, but, it is significant to those who have received the assistance. The SOS operators are organized into two shifts, a dayshift and

a nightshift, thus creating a 24 hours available consultancy with the telephone. At all times, there is one operator who is by the phone all the night. In a case of an emergency intervention, the SOS operator has to assess the risk and by this assessment to come up with a meeting plan with the caller. After the plan has been made, the SOS operator contacts the team from social assistance that takes over the case. Depending on the risk level of the case, the team decides whether to include the police in the assistance. The centers for social work are included at that moment when the victim is a minor, and by the procedure they should be on the call 24 hours a day. Beside the increased working hours of the SOS line, it can be concluded that the number of calls is significantly increased.

At the beginning, the SOS line was consisted of a team with 9 operators, which gained the necessary experience with the help from their colleagues from the partner organization in Bulgaria. During the three-day training in Sofia, the top members of the teams shared their knowledge and experience regarding this vocation, a vocation that requires a great deal of devotion and exceptionally stable and psychologically strong individuals. The SOS trainings for operators are organized every year and those who attend are both experienced members as well as the newly interested ones, who wish to improve the skills of this profession.

At the moment, the SOS line is consisted of a 5-members team, who are exceptionally professional and experienced in their work.

Knowing the situation in the society, in 2004, the Open Gate had put great effort for the opening of a free SOS line that would allow all citizens of the Republic of Macedonia more accessible information, advice and assistance regarding human trafficking. At the beginning, the line number was **+38922 777 070** and soon afterwards, the free line number was opened, **0800 11111**.

In order to recognize the importance of this problem (human trafficking) and to raise the awareness of the national institutions and the public opinion, it is necessary to employ all the forces in society so that the consciousness would be raised in the matter of this issue. The existence of the SOS line is especially important because it allows all interested citizens, momentary victims, as well as potential victims to have an opportunity to call for help and information. That is why the Open Gate employs the most recent methods for promotion and advertising of the SOS line, which is an important precondition for the number of calls.

## ***2. Regulatory documents of the SOS project***

### ***2.1. SOS line functional structure***

Duty hours' roster (plan)

The work of the SOS Line is realized through on duty hours divided as follows:

### Types of duties

Duty hours are divided into three shifts: from 8.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m.; from 2.00 p.m. to 8.00 p.m.; and from 8.00 p.m. to 8.00 a.m. every day. The SOS Line works 24 hours per day.

### Switch of duty hours

The coordinator has the right to increase or decrease the number of daily duty hours, or exempt an operator from the Saturday/Sunday duties, depending on the capacity of the SOS operator to provide good consultation to client, especially bearing in mind her current psychological and emotional stability.

## 2.2. SOS team meetings

### *Organizational-administrative meeting of the team*

This meeting, held every Tuesday at 10.00 a.m., is attended by all the operators, the coordinator, and the Project assistant. At the meeting is drawn up the duty roster for the next month; also, changes or news in the operating of the SOS Line are brought up; further, procedures for governing ascertained; and the operators informed about all the newly emerged changes pertaining to the services or the programs in the current month.

### *Group supervision*

Group supervision is held every month or more often if needed. On that occasion, all calls are reviewed and the problems the SOS operators encountered working with specific clients discussed. When necessary, individual supervision sessions are organized, as well

### *Additional trainings*

Beside the regular trainings, the SOS Line operators attend additional trainings or role plays. The reason for the trainings ensues from the need for new information and knowledge relating to the work on a certain problem or a group of clients.

## 3. SOS line: our connection between prevention and direct support

The SOS Line represents one kind of prevention against human trafficking and direct support to the victims. It can best be evinced from the services offered by the SOS Line: its work interweaves a whole array of activities both from the field of prevention and from the field of direct support.

On one side, the SOS Line offers the citizens easily accessible information on human trafficking and the measures against it, especially because it is difficult to control it. The SOS Line does not aim at any specific target group, age, or sex; it is available to

the audience at large and is free of charge, which is of paramount importance in the prevention of human trafficking. At the same time it should be pointed out that through the SOS Line callers get information personally, by way of a direct conversation with an SOS operator. Thus they are not limited as regards questions they might have and can talk as long as they don't feel satisfied with the offered reply, or they do not find adequate solution for their case.

On the other hand, the SOS Line represents the most suitable means by way of which the victims of human trafficking can establish a quick contact for help and rescue when the victim of human trafficking in question is offered appropriate intervention on our part or a safe shelter at our Residence. Among other things, the SOS Line is important for direct support of victims of human trafficking because it offers emotional support and conversation, which is anonymous, thus more acceptable, especially for victims who already experienced human trafficking.

In fact, the work and the services of the SOS Line clearly indicate that it represents one kind of connection between these two important segments in the combat against human trafficking, and that its more efficient functioning plays a vital role in the overall operating of the Organization as a whole, as well as it contributes to the reduction of this problem in the country.

The SOS line plays an important role regarding the presiding, acceptance and the direct support for the victims of human trafficking. For that cause, the SOS line offers services that help the victims of HT directly, regardless whether they are momentary victims, past victims or potential victims. Also, the SOS line offers help for the victims' families, as well as the families that wish to report a case of a missing person. For all kinds of calls related to HT, the SOS line cooperates with the Open Gate's program for direct support.

What should be emphasized when it comes to the relation between the SOS line and the reintegration of the victims is that it is a constant relation. The practice shows that the SOS phones a direct connection between the victims that have already left the shelter and the Open Gate. The victims can always call the SOS line and look for counsel regarding an obstacle or a problem they are facing in a given situation. The connection remains as long as the victim has the need to communicate with us. In certain cases, that communication is one or two calls but in other cases it lasts for months.

#### **4. Challenge**

Since the problem with the trafficking in human beings exists in our country, and with regard to the fact that the trends of this issue are spreading vastly in new ways such as forced labour slavery, beggary, paedophilia and child pornography, the exist-

ence of the SOS line in a country, and especially in Macedonia is not only a challenge but also a true necessity for its citizens.

Namely, the SOS line not only offers information about what trafficking in human beings is, which are the ways to become a victim of HT, the specific target groups subjected to this problem, but it is also one of the largest source of information regarding this issue. Within the Open Gate, through its daily work and organization, the SOS line creates an informative database that besides the huge number of data for this problem, also contains great number of contacts, such as international and nongovernmental organizations dealing with this problem. This database also creates lists of telephone numbers for SOS emergency calls regarding HT as well as telephone numbers for other type of assistance throughout the country. The fact that the existence of an informative database such as this one, represents a challenge for the benefit of every country lies in the fact that it is created, i.e. recreated on a daily basis, through personal research by the SOS operator, direct operator-client SOS calls or calls from clients directly involved in such problems or simply interested in them. In fact, this is one of the ways through which a country can build a more thorough representation of the situations and drifts in the country regarding this problem and based on this, to employ a proper approach for dealing with this problem.

This is why the importance of the SOS line regarding trafficking in human beings rises in our country, and its organization and logistics are a real challenge, since they provide the citizens with all the precautionary procedures that can help in the protection from this problem and represents and a good instrument for information check ups. Namely, the SOS line for assistance on the subject of HT represents one of the most functional ways through which the citizens of a country are provided with the most accessible and least difficult ways as to access information about HT and the measures to protect themselves from it. What is especially important with the SOS line is its unlimited nature, meaning that it does not aims towards only one separate target group, age or sex, but is accessible to the general public and is free of charge which is very important for the protection against HT. On the other hand, the SOS line is the most suitable measure for supporting the HT victims, who can establish quick call for help and rescue, at which point the victims are being offered the right kind of help and a safe place to stay.

### ***5. Cooperation with other institutions and nongovernmental organizations***

Since human trafficking is an international problem, the efforts taken in the protection from it are based on international level. Because of that, Open Gate treats this issue on international and national level, including the La Strada network in 2001 as well as the national network *Budnost* consisted of 12 other nongovernmental organizations from other cities in Macedonia. The role of Open Gate/La Strada, Macedonia

is to present the human trafficking as a type of criminal net that breaks the essential human rights - the right of freedom and life.

Gaining this positive experience, in 2004, Open Gate initiated the formation of a network of NGOs on a national level, *Budnost*, which would treat this problem and act vigorously in the fight against HT. Through this network, the Open Gate has managed to better acquaint the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia with this issue and establish closer links with them in order to recognize and assess the real picture of this problem on a national level. At the same time, through this network, there is a more effective promotion of the work and services the SOS line provides for the citizens of the Republic of Macedonia.

At this moment, the network is promoted via website ([www.antitrafficking-partners.org.mk](http://www.antitrafficking-partners.org.mk)). Taking into account that the resolution of the problem of trafficking in human beings affects all relevant institutions, the Open Gate/La Strada holds constructive cooperation with all Government institutions, NGOs and international organizations that are directly or indirectly working on the issue of fighting against trafficking in human beings.

The Open Gate constantly stays in touch with all state institutions, NGOs and international organizations, with the purpose of effectively promoting its mission, aimed at the fight against human trafficking, as well as the psychosocial support to the HT victims.

The Open Gate cooperates with:

- National and international nongovernmental organizations and networks
- Government Institutions
- International and worldwide organizations
- The Business Sector
- The Local Self-government
- La Strada members: Poland, the Czech Republic, Netherlands, Ukraine, Bulgaria, Belarus, Moldavia, Bosnia and Herzegovina

### 3.3. ASTRA Daily Center and mobile team for field actions

The main role of ASTRA SOS Hotline has been developed in the process of establishing contact with clients and the (preliminary) identification of (potential) victims of trafficking in human beings. The extent of this role depends on the structure and scope of activities of the organization itself. Namely, the work of SOS hotline consultants with people identified as trafficking victims can end after urgent assistance is provided (accommodation, medical and other interventions, depending on the needs). Further steps in the recovery and (re)integration process may be taken on by another team, highly specialized for working with victims during the recovery process.

From this perspective, the basic role of the SOS hotline would be (preliminary) identification and interventions during the initial period or during a brief period of recovery. However, further work with the victims would not be the direct responsibility of the SOS hotline team. It should be noted that the “work of the SOS hotline consultant with the client”, as discussed, primarily means psycho-social support, identification of needs and referral to experts to provide various forms of support. Therefore, in accordance with the basic role of helplines, consultants would not continue regular direct work with clients, but would instead be informed on their progress through the work of downstream partners.

However, the role of the SOS hotline does not need to end there. SOS hotline activities can be expanded, from identification and urgent assistance programs, to an assistance program in the reintegration process of trafficking victims. In this case, one segment of the helpline operates as outreach towards continuous monitoring and work with clients during extended periods of time. Therefore, apart from direct contact with the victims, SOS hotline consultants are tasked with tracking their recovery by means of providing active support and tutoring, which, in this case, means organizing and constantly adjusting various reintegration activities to the needs of the client.

ASTRA SOS Hotline program was significantly enriched and expanded since it was founded in 2002. SOS hotline work includes a large number of activities, since the specific needs of every client need to be met. These needs may be sorted in the following general categories: receiving and responding to calls, fieldwork, providing various types of assistance, cooperation with professionals engaged for providing assistance, communication with relevant organizations and institutions, as well as recording all data and saving it to a database.

The role of ASTRA SOS Hotline today is threefold. It is used to implement prevention, for direct assistance to victims and for their reintegration. Interventions in the ASTRA SOS Hotline program and direct assistance for victims are provided as part of urgent

assistance (immediately upon identifying a trafficking victim), during the recovery period and through long-term monitoring with the goal of reintegration.

ASTRA SOS Hotline program was designed to represent a response to the needs of persons identified as victims of trafficking in human beings. This form of communication with clients contacting us results in establishing trust in the client – consultant relationship and building a foundation for further cooperation.

As a means of prevention, the SOS Hotline is of key importance to our citizens, especially for young people, because they use it to obtain information on safe migration. Even though the situation with informing citizens on issues related to trafficking in human beings was significantly improved against the situation from several years earlier, everything is still left to the enthusiasm and efforts of non-governmental organizations and dedicated individuals. Poverty and lack of employment opportunities have forced many young people to try their luck in foreign countries. Upon exiting the trafficking chain, while seeking employment and attempting to regain balance in their lives, people can become the prey of traffickers again. SOS Hotline is an important link and source of useful information, able to prevent the problem at its root.

As part of direct victim assistance, ASTRA SOS Hotline is a core means of identifying victims of human trafficking and organizing various types of assistance. Thus contact is established with the families of clients suspected to have ended up in the trafficking chain, and cooperation is achieved with citizens in possession of information on traffickers or the location of victims.

As an informal instrument, ASTRA SOS Hotline is an important link in the chain of identification and assistance, since it is a well known fact that potential clients find it easier to opt for assistance by helplines than state institutions, primarily to avoid the slow pace and other inconveniences of a bureaucratic approach frequent in institutions.

ASTRA Daily Center arose as the result of five years of operating the SOS Hotline, based on direct experiences in working with trafficking victims and based on assessing their needs. Started in January 2007, ASTRA Daily Center provides adequate legal, medical and/or psychological assistance in the reintegration process to all trafficking victims, regardless of sex, age, nationality, religion or race. The main reason for opening the Daily Center lies in the fact that to date in Serbia, there are no systemic programs for the social inclusion of trafficking victims, even though the number of identified victims – citizens of this country – is increasing. Victim reintegration is an acute problem. Victims are not offered systemic and long-term programs and there is no information on victims following their repatriation to their home country, or on the success of their reintegration. This segment requires the urgent and organized inclusion of the social protection system and the creation of special programs as part of it.

One of the issues of particular concern to us, as a non-governmental organization, is that trafficking in human beings is still treated primarily through the issues of illegal migration, smuggling and disorderly conduct, and not as a most severe case of violating human rights. Unfortunately, practice shows that human rights of victims are being violated even after they exit the trafficking chain.

Gaps in the entire anti-trafficking mechanism in Serbia, from identification to reintegration activities, are visible through the work of the SOS Hotline.

At this time, after they are identified, victims are either placed in one of the shelters for trafficking victims (neither of which is adapted to the needs of juvenile trafficking victims) or returned to their families.

Some of the women and children victims of violence or trafficking victims end up in the trafficking chain again, showing that an extremely important link is missing in the chain of support, thus further focus on preventing re-trafficking, i.e. redesigning reintegration programs, is required.

During the recovery period, the victims in ASTRA Daily Center are provided with professional development trainings, support in making the decision to continue and finish their education process, economic empowerment trainings, as well as empowerment through group and individual work.

Clients from Belgrade and the surrounding areas take part in these activities. Since the services of the Daily Center are not available to clients living outside Belgrade, in these cases the provision of these types of assistance through the SOS Hotline program, aimed at reintegration, is done entirely through calls and fieldwork. SOS Hotline consultants are engaged in coordinating all of the activities in the Daily Center program and they take active part in monitoring the progress of victims.

ASTRA SOS Hotline developed an individual approach to each case from the very beginning, and the relationship with the work of the Daily Center provided space to additionally develop this method of working. Due to the existing client base and direct contact with them, an overview on the current situation for each of them can be created, from the perspective of their security assessment, health status, family/accommodation situation, psychological condition and legal status. The next step is creating an individual reintegration plan considering the abovementioned parameters in accordance with their wishes and expectations.

To provide coordination between the activities of the SOS Hotline and Daily Center, practice has shown that one person needs to directly track program implementation in the Daily Center and align those activities common with the SOS Hotline. Considering the fact that their work is largely entangled, ASTRA SOS Hotline consultants and Daily Center hostess have the following obligations:

- Regular meetings (once per week) of the helpline team, with mandatory presence of the Daily Center hostess;
- Organizing the daily activities of the Daily Center;
- Therapy scheduling with a psychologist/psychiatrist;
- Psychosocial support;
- As agreed with the client, and based on their needs, individual development plans are drawn;
- Monitoring of client progress and 6-month review;
- Establishing contact with non-governmental organizations abroad in certain cases;
- Establishing contact with the ASTRA Network in certain cases;
- Case referral to relevant institutions;
- Keeping agreed forms of records.

Assistance is provided on ASTRA's premises or through fieldwork of the SOS Hotline consultants or professional associates, in the offices of professionals we cooperate with and/or institutions/non-governmental organizations, depending on the specific form of assistance provided for the client.

Psycho-social support is one of the most frequent forms of assistance to clients in the reintegration process. It includes providing information, legal, psychological and technical support, as well as monitoring of trafficking victims through all institutions wherein they can assert their human and civil rights. It is well known that our clients find it easier and simpler to contact ASTRA than state institutions. Thus, one of the key services provided for the clients is contacting institutions: the police, judicial bodies, social welfare centers, medical establishments, etc. Said forms of assistance are mostly fully provided by SOS Hotline consultants, since they represent support, and not specific forms of assistance requiring the engagement of professional associates.

*Psychological consultation* includes the following activities:

- Psychological support for clients during each individual conversation, by SOS Hotline consultants;
- Psychological support to clients (apart from material and technical support and information) in each phase of asserting their human and civil rights through institutions (legal services, social welfare centers, etc.);
- Organizing professional psychological assistance in the form of therapies and consultation for trafficking victims.

In addition, medical, psychological and legal assistance is available, with various educational, creative and recreational content available to clients during the reintegration process. These programs are led by trained professional associates, working in cooperation with helpline consultants. They are in charge of monitoring the effects of this work, as well as tailoring adequate programs in cooperation and consultation not just with the associates, but the clients themselves as well. Consultants organize and monitor clients of the Daily Center in implementing all of the activities listed below.

*Medical assistance* includes providing basic medical assistance, as well as specialist examinations and securing laboratory tests. If the need for specific medical interventions is diagnosed, their implementation is provided for. Additionally, medical examinations are performed intended for obtaining medical records that can subsequently be used in court proceedings (HIV testing, dentist examinations, internal and forensics medicine, etc.).

*Legal assistance* is implemented through ASTRA Legal Team and their activities are:

- Examining legal regulations with the goal of informing clients on labour rights and duties;
- Examining contracts offered to our clients – for cases of ambiguity, illegal clauses and other segments of the contract that could cause dire consequences;
- Clarification of the contract contents, i.e. its meaning with special care given to potential detrimental effects of signing such a contract;
- Written legal advice;
- Assistance for ASTRA clients in institutional or court proceedings;
- Representation of trafficking victims in court proceedings on trafficking in human beings;
- Representation of trafficking victims in damage claims proceedings.

*Technical assistance* relates to reacting in emergency situations, such as transport to the home or visiting an institution/organization for utilizing some form of assistance. Should the client currently lack any means of survival, they are provided with the necessities. Likewise, as part of urgent interventions, accommodation is provided as an alternative to accommodation in the shelter for trafficking victims (it should be noted that existing shelters for human trafficking in Serbia do not accommodate male persons, which is just one of the situations where alternative forms of accommodation must be sought).

*Fieldwork* is mostly performed with the aim of establishing direct contact with trafficking victims and their families and representing the interests of victims before rele-

vant institutions. When identification, monitoring the implementation of some form of assistance or organizing an activity or support for a client during reintegration is required, fieldwork is done at the location where the victim resides, on the territory of Belgrade or anywhere in Serbia.

In order to achieve full efficiency when managing individual planning cases, ASTRA Daily Center needs to take active part in developing the reintegration plan of its clients. Thus, along with feedback on the progress of clients in the program, they will be additionally motivated to achieve goals defined in this plan, while it would provide us with a very precise image of the progress achieved during certain periods of time. A sensitive progress assessment scale for each parameter enables the monitoring of the results of work and identifying available capacities and weaknesses of each individual, representing a basis for the reintegration plan.

The main purpose of the Daily Center is the coordinated implementation of carefully planned preventive-education activities (working with potential trafficking victims and groups of clients under increased risk) and the extension of systemic professional assistance during recovery (of trafficking victims). We primarily focus on a holistic, interdisciplinary approach with monitoring and analysis of the operation of the Daily Center, with the goal of timely identification of current needs and problems faced by our clients. The promotion of positive values, such as openness, solidarity, tolerance and responsibility are an integral part of everyday work. The Daily Center was imagined as a space offering the clients, along with various programs, the possibility to select or suggest new activities in accordance with their affinities. It aims to achieve a stimulating atmosphere, creating a safe and healthy environment for the clients and their children. In time, it became clear that trafficking victims that visit it and engage in various activities feel it is a safe and stimulating place.

The key characteristic of this program is that it was tailored to the needs and requests of our clients, and that it can be redesigned according to practice.

All of the implemented activities were created in cooperation with professionals taking part in the process of providing assistance to (potential) trafficking victims, and in accordance with the wishes and express requirements of clients that need urgent response upon establishing contact, as well as subsequently, during the reintegration process.

### *Other Activities of the Daily Center*

#### *I Therapeutic*

Individual and group therapies with trafficking victims are certainly the core, and may be considered the most important form of assistance provided to the users of the Daily Center. Professional associates work with clients through individual and group sessions aiming to reduce and remove post-traumatic stress disorders, improve the

quality of relationships (family, partner, social), improve conflict resolution, as well as increase self-confidence and strengthen positive personal capacities.

### *II Creative program*

1. Creative workshops were designed as a possible way to overcome mental and emotional problems. Their main goal is to assist victims in channelling their feelings of love and hate properly through creative work, to discover, improve and gradually build their self-confidence, strengthen their personality and overcome their trauma. Clients in these workshops painted t-shirts, made bead and wire jewellery, created collages out of fabric, made simple skirt designs, decorated wooden boxes, etc.

2. Art Workshop lessons unify the ideas of art as therapy wherein by visual means, movement, acting or dancing, strong, subtle or destructive feelings and awareness can be expressed. Activities in these lessons resulted in an exhibition organized in 2008 on December 2, the International Day for the Abolition of Slavery.

### *III Recreational program*

1. Sports Activities (yoga, self-defence lessons, aerobics)

Activities in working with trafficking victims focus on physical exercise as well. A very important item in working on empowering girls, especially in the field of counselling and apart from psychological/emotional support, is the physical aspect of support that was shown to be a required component. Sports activities aim at raising awareness on the capabilities and limits of the human body (especially of use for those that survived sexual violence, brutal physical violence or long-term emotional neglect). Introduction to the potentials of their own body, building a positive relation to the body, raising awareness and correcting the flow of breathing, regaining the natural rhythm of the body and creating a psychological foundation for expressing full potential creates the preconditions to accept reality as it is once more, as well as to actively partake in creating one's own reality and overcome numerous problems in life.

2. "Popcorn" gathers clients watching various entertaining or educational films of their own choice at the Daily Center.

3. "Going Out"

Occasional visits to the cinema, theatre, exhibitions or various cultural or entertainment events are organized.

4. Cooking lessons

Cooking lessons represent an activity that initially had no fixed schedule or structure. It arose spontaneously as an expression of the wishes of our clients to express their creativity in yet another way and do something for themselves and others. Through

socialization, clients suggest a certain food or dessert to be prepared at their own initiative, which in time made this activity a regular staple of ASTRA Daily Center program.

This type of socialization is especially interesting since it represents a form of group self-assistance that arose spontaneously, where clients, in a very relaxing environment created for themselves, exchange experiences and emotions with minimum need for intervention by the Daily Center consultants.

#### *IV Economic Empowerment*

It occurs on multiple levels and primarily includes support in returning to the educational system if education was interrupted, or assistance in further professional training and additional education, to facilitate easier self-sufficiency and a return to the normal flow of life, thereby accelerating and easing the process of (re)integration.

Within the Daily Center clients have access to additional workshops and lessons, representing one form of support in the process of economic empowerment. This primarily includes:

- a) Workshops on writing a CV, motivational letter, preparing adequate documents, preparing for a job interview.
- b) Computer lessons providing ASTRA clients with the opportunity to learn to use computers and the Internet, and therefore locate information that might be relevant for their future employment, as well as to access entertainment and new and interesting content. In addition, clients have access to specialized computer courses.
- c) Learning foreign languages is an activity of direct utility in employment, but also provides an opportunity for expanding existing knowledge, exploring different cultures, but it is also entertaining.





## Chapter 4

### THE POSITION OF SOS HOTLINE IN THE NATIONAL REFERRAL MECHANISMS

The National Referral Mechanism is an operational framework established in 2004 in the Republic of Serbia, based on the cooperation of various anti-trafficking actors. It provides the state with the capacity for protecting the human rights of trafficked persons and for creating a comprehensive response for combating trafficking through a strategic partnership with involved non-government organizations.

The National Referral Mechanism identified all actors that could come in contact with (potential) trafficking victims, along with the necessary aid system for trafficking victims including medical, psycho-social and legal assistance. The Hotline aimed at preventing the problem of trafficking in human beings and identifying and assisting trafficking victims is one of the components of this system.

The Hotline is open to all citizens with knowledge of trafficking in human beings who wish to remain anonymous and have the information they possess be presented to the competent institutions indirectly. Furthermore, SOS hotline is occasionally a means for citizens or (potential) victims to avoid administrative and other obligations that contacting the institutions entails. Likewise, a low level of confidence towards the institutions could be an issue; therefore the Hotline is used as a medium for transferring information. Due to all the above mentioned, the Hotline run by a non-government organization has a very important and special role in the section of the National Referral Mechanism dealing with the identification of (potential) victims of trafficking in human beings.

A second operational level of the Hotline is establishing direct contact with victims of trafficking in human beings, most often at the initiative of the families or the victims themselves. Of special significance is the very possibility for the person having experienced trafficking in human beings to opt for requesting information and/or support/assistance, as well as to choose its form (telephone support or direct contact). Contact through the Hotline enables the victim to retain a certain form of anonymity until they wish to request some type of assistance or to join available programs for recovery and reintegration. Likewise, the Hotline provides a heavily traumatized victim with the opportunity to calm down and reconsider matters, in case they only require information at a given moment, and if they want to seek assistance later. This can be of importance in terms of psychological preparation and decision to register and enter the procedures for protection and assistance.

Following the referral of the information on the trafficking/victim, the Hotline is used to organize an urgent intervention, if needed. Only then a final identification,

provision of assistance and referral to relevant organizations and services if needed would follow. The Hotline is also a means of monitoring the success of reintegration by maintaining regular contact with victims in the course of subsequent assistance. Thus the Hotline is of manifold significance and its utilization is possible and purposeful in all phases of providing assistance for victims of trafficking as predicted by the National Referral Mechanism.

It is a very specific means for working with victims of trafficking in human beings that, in cooperation with other relevant services, contributes to an increase in the number of identified and potential victims of trafficking in human beings.

Various models of the National Referral Mechanism have been developed in South-east Europe. This Manual presents the mechanism operating in the Republic of Serbia. It was designed during 2002-2003 and has been in place since March 2004.

## 4.1. National Referral Mechanism in the Republic of Serbia

Trafficked victims identified by institutions, most often by the police, the Agency for Coordination of Protection to Trafficking Victims and/or NGO, enter a program for assistance and support.

NGO active in victim assistance in Serbia are ASTRA and two shelters:

**Safe House** - Shelter based in a secret location in Belgrade, run by NGO Counselling Centre against Family Violence. Until 2004, this was the only shelter for trafficked victims in Serbia. It started working in early 2002. Safe House is a closed-type shelter, with the capacity to accommodate 15 persons. The average time of staying in the Shelter is about one month. At the beginning, this Shelter was planned as a transitory institution, but many victims, including foreigners, stayed there for much longer, sometimes for months, in spite of the fact that almost all of them were included in IOM's repatriation program and that many of them expressed the wish to return to the country of origin as soon as possible. In the Shelter Rulebook, it is said that clients are provided (besides food and accommodation) with legal, medical, psychological, medical and any other assistance needed.

**Temporary Home** - Designed as a one-year reintegration program for domestic nationals, Temporary Home has been working since June 1, 2004 as an open-type shelter, run by local NGO Atina with IOM's support. Temporary Home, with the capacity to admit seven persons, is located in Belgrade. Victims have access to medical services within the general public health care scheme. Psychological counselling and support is provided through individual and group work, depending on clients' needs and wishes. Moreover, they are offered legal aid and possibility to attend language courses and other courses of their choice. It is planned to offer beneficiaries assistance and support in searching a job after the completion of school or professional training.

As far as state institutions are concerned, it is the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims that is in charge of the first assessment of (potential) victims' social, medical and legal needs and further organization and coordination of assistance to them.

Since the adoption of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and Protocol thereto to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, signatory countries have been finding different solutions for the problem of coordination of assistance to trafficked victims. Thanks to OSCE support and based on the model presented in *Practical Handbook - National Referral Mechanisms - Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons*, published by OSCE/ODIHR, the Republic of Serbia has set up a unique mechanism in the region, which served as a model to other countries, as well. Namely, within the Ministry of Labour, Employment and Social Policy<sup>88</sup>, the Agency for Coordination of Assistance to the Victims of Human Trafficking was established in 2004 to coordinate all actors involved in providing victim assistance, first of all nongovernmental organizations, which were the first to draw attention to the problem of human trafficking (NGO ASTRA<sup>89</sup>, NGO Counselling against Family Violence, NGO Beosupport), but also state institution that come in touch with potential trafficked victims.

Being a core component of the National Referral Mechanism for victims of trafficking<sup>90</sup>, the Agency represents a co-ordination body in the process of assisting victims of trafficking and organising different types of services to them. The Agency also serves as a clearinghouse of information regarding available data on medical, psycho-social and legal services in the country and abroad that are of importance for victims of trafficking.

The Agency does not provide direct assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings.

The Agency deals with all types of trafficking in human beings (e.g. sexual exploitation, forced labour, forced bagging, etc.). It does not handle cases of smuggling of people.

First assessment of (potential) victims' social, medical and legal needs and further organization and co-ordination of assistance to them. This can include the following:

- placement in shelters or other safe accommodation facilities;
- acquirement of necessary documentation regarding victims' legal status (regulation of residence permits and personal documents);

<sup>88</sup> It was established within the Institute for upbringing of children and juveniles in Belgrade

<sup>89</sup> In Annex 8, you can find the text of the Memorandum of Understanding signed between ASTRA and the Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims on 24 May 2005.

<sup>90</sup> National Referral Mechanism is a co-operative framework of different anti trafficking actors. The National Referral Mechanism enables the state to ensure protection of human rights of the victims and to create a comprehensive response to the phenomenon through strategic partnership with NGO sector.

- identifying forms of necessary assistance, including reintegration programs;
- informing victims on their rights, status and possibilities for their recovery;
- monitoring of the process of reintegration of victims of trafficking in the country;
- final identification of victims in co-operation with direct service providers in course of the reflection period.

## 4.2. Overview of referral procedures and co-ordination of victim protection in Serbia



### **I step: Initial assessment of (potential) victims' medical, social and legal needs**

Identification of victims is difficult and one of the most important tasks of all actors in the field of combating trafficking in human beings. In almost all countries in the region the police or judiciary does the identification. The identification is done based on valid evidence or on a victim's statement. This way, many of the victims stay unidentified and do not get necessary assistance and protection.

In order to avoid this, the Agency grants victim status to all potential victims that get in touch with the Agency. This approach enables further identification of victims, which is done after victims' period of stabilization, by an organization/institution that is in charge of providing direct assistance to victims jointly with the Agency.

### **II step: Referral of (potential) victims to organizations/institutions, individuals in charge of providing direct assistance to victims**

The Agency, based on the initial need assessment, informs victims about possibilities for recovery and refers them to available assistance and protection in the country. In accordance with the victims' best interest, and if a victim agrees with the offered assistance and protection, the Agency refers them to counsellors in charge of direct victim assistance and protection. This can include sheltering or safe accommodation, psychosocial, medical and legal assistance, reintegration programs and voluntary return to a country of origin, based on the specifics of the case.

### **III step: Coordination of victim protection**

The Agency is the coordination body in overall victim assistance and protection mechanism in Serbia. In practice this means that the Agency receives and notifies all information regarding victim assistance and protection. This enables the Agency to create and update the following databases:

- a database on the process of victim assistance and protection in the country
- a database on organisations, institutions and experts that provide different types of assistance and support of relevance to victims of trafficking in the country and abroad.

### **IV step: Informing victims on their status, rights and possibilities for recuperation in the country**

Most of the victims are uninformed on their status, rights and possibilities for assistance and protection in the country. The Agency makes an effort to keep victims informed on all issues that might be of relevance for them in the process of recuperation and protection. Additionally, the Agency will inform the victims on the situation

in which they are, including the possibilities available to them. In accordance with that, the Agency covers the issue of temporary residence permit.

The Agency is the only state institution that has authority to apply for temporary **residence permits** for foreign victims of trafficking. The regulations allow for a 3-month initial reflection period. The visa can be extended depending on the intensity of the victim's co-operation with the authorities.

The Agency regulates the issues of registered residence in the country for local victims, which is a precondition for enjoying medical care and material subsidies (social benefits, etc.).

Securing **compensation to victims** for the material and moral damages they have suffered from is of high importance. As from the point of view of granting partial satisfaction to victims, as well as for the purpose of obstructing the resurrection of the trafficking chain.

#### **V step: Case monitoring and follow up of cases in reintegration process**

The Agency follows up cases from the identification until the end of the process of reintegration in the country and abroad. Such case monitoring includes collaboration with local, regional and international actors in the field of combating trafficking, especially those who provide direct assistance. It is of high importance to get feedback on the process of recovery and reintegration, as it enables the Agency to plan its work. In this segment of the work, the regional NGO network plays important role.

The Agency cooperates on a daily basis with specialized NGOs, the police, judiciary, professional from the sphere of social protection, and other professionals and organizations that protect and assist victims of trafficking.

Unfortunately, in Serbia, there are no programs specially designed for the victims of child trafficking. The lack of specialized assistance and protection service for minors represents a gap in the assistance framework in Serbia.





## Chapter 5

Helplines were often outside the focus of experts and off the agenda of those participating in drafting global or regional strategies and policies. The following text will present the initiative of the European Commission on a common Helpline for victims of trafficking.

### 5.1. A European helpline on trafficking in human beings



*Suzanne Hoff, International Coordinator of La Strada International, European NGO network against trafficking in human beings*

On 15<sup>th</sup> February 2007, the European Commission adopted a Decision<sup>91</sup> requiring its Member States to reserve a six-digit number range starting with the digits 116 for services of social value in Europe. A European 116 helpline on trafficking in human beings could be one of them, as suggested by members of the European Parliament and others<sup>92</sup>.

The aim of such a European helpline on the issue of trafficking in human beings would be to allow trafficked persons and others, to reach services by using the same recognisable number throughout the EU – instead of the current patchwork of numbers, to be operational in each of the 27 EU member states. It was expected that the establishment of a common EU hotline number for victims of trafficking could strengthen existing national services for trafficked persons and improve access, once the hotline number would be well known in origin, transit and destination countries.

<sup>91</sup> 2007/116/EC

<sup>92</sup> Already in 2006, members of the European Parliament called for the establishment of a multilingual hotline with a single European number with the aim of providing first assistance to trafficked persons

Back in 2007, La Strada International (LSI), together with other NGOs, including ASTRA,<sup>93</sup> provided its views, concerns and recommendations in response to the European Commission's consultation<sup>94</sup>. Although LSI and the other organisations involved do support measures to be taken to improve the identification of trafficked persons and ensure access of trafficked persons to adequate assistance, questions have been raised, about the feasibility and need for a common EU hot-line number, and about the functionality and target group of the proposed European wide hotline, wondering whether it would not be wise to first concentrate on improving existing (helpline) referral and service systems.

In May 2009 the European Commission launched a tender for a study on the need for and the feasibility of a European 116 hotline for victims of trafficking in human beings<sup>95</sup>, after a formal request to reserve a European number for victims of trafficking was submitted to the European Commission in October 2007.<sup>96</sup> La Strada International submitted a proposal and was selected to conduct the study. To ensure objectivity, the study was conducted by a research team consisting of the German Sozialwissenschaftliches FrauenForschungsInstitut (SoFFI) and two consultants/experts, Mike Dottridge and Marjan Wijers, with a broad experience in the field of trafficking in human beings. LSI acted as main applicant played only a coordinating and facilitating role in ensuring that all major stakeholders, among which the main NGOs in each of the 27 EU countries were identified and consulted.

#### *Aim of the study*

The overall objective of the feasibility study<sup>97</sup>, as described in the Terms of References, was to map-up in all EU Member States the existing hotlines that deal partly or exclusively with victims of trafficking in human beings and map up the assistance services linked to such hotlines that are provided to victims of human trafficking and to analyse the feasibility for a European-wide 116-hotline and assistance service for victims of human trafficking.

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93 LSI and the member organisations in 9 European countries, GAATW, Living for Tomorrow, Anti Slavery International, PAG-ASA, On the Road, Ban Ying, ASTRA, BLINN and Esperanza.

94 Response to the public call for consultation on identification of services of social value in Europe that could benefit from single European free phone numbers starting with 116 - in particular towards the consolation and lobby towards a European free phone number for services on trafficking in human beings in Europe, Amsterdam, 28th of September, 2007

95 Tender No. JLS/2008/D"/004.

96 By the coalition Stop the Traffik ([www.stopthetraffik.org](http://www.stopthetraffik.org)).

97 Feasibility and assessment study on a European hotline for victims of trafficking in human beings, 2009

The research team defined “helpline” as: “A publicly advertised telephone service aimed at a specific target group, which can be reached by callers within the advertised opening hours, and which provides (emergency) assistance and protection (crisis intervention) and/or information and advice on trafficking”.

For the study a multi-methodological approach was chosen, combining quantitative and qualitative research methods. Questionnaires were developed and distributed among anti trafficking helplines/NGOs in all 27 EU Member States, as well among helplines operating in related areas. Two online-questionnaires were designed for anti trafficking helplines/NGOs, the first asking for data, the second for opinions. A third on-line questionnaire was designed for helplines operating in related areas, such as violence against women and migrant helplines. In addition semi structured interviews were held with a range of national and European stakeholders, and information from other relevant national and international sources was collected. Next to the questionnaires, national coordinators were identified in the 27 European countries, to conduct interviews with the various national stakeholders: anti-trafficking helplines, linked services, ministries and the police, while the research team additionally conducted interviews with European actors, including representatives of the Communication Committee (Co-Com) of the European Commission, the European Parliament, PICUM (Platform for Cooperation on Undocumented Migrants), ITU (International Trade Union), Stop the Traffik, Missing Children in Europe, Child Helpline International and Europol.

#### *Helplines on trafficking in human beings in the European Union*

The study confirmed earlier statements of La Strada International and other anti trafficking NGOs, that the situation on helplines in each European Union country is currently not comparable and quite diverse. As the researchers state, the “existing helplines in the EU Member States vary considerably in terms of their mandate, target groups and services provided. Due to the lack of a common definition, various types of anti-trafficking services consider themselves to be a helpline: organisations whose main function is to operate a 24 hour national helpline on trafficking, as well as anti-trafficking NGOs which operate a telephone service for a limited number of hours per day or week as a relatively minor part of their counselling centre services. Anti-trafficking NGOs providing similar services (including advice over the telephone) qualify themselves as ‘helpline’ or not, depending on their own perception”.<sup>98</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Feasibility and assessment study on a European hotline for victims of trafficking in human beings, 2009

Based on this self-identification, anti-trafficking helplines currently exist in 18 of the 27 EU Member States. The majority of these helplines are run by anti trafficking NGOs for whom the helpline is only a minor part of their work. Opening times are generally limited and the target group remains predominantly women. Most helplines are not toll free. The services helplines provide, directly or indirectly are mostly free for trafficked persons and consist of a broad range of short term and long term services.

Further although trafficked persons belong to the target group of most of those helplines and much effort is made to make the number known, in practice the existing helplines are called by only very few trafficked persons:<sup>99</sup> "The proportion of trafficked persons seemed to be low in general, but differs among the helplines". The majority of callers are cooperation partners (other service providers, including the police) and persons abused or exploited in ways and contexts other than trafficking. In comparison helplines in related areas receive much more calls, including calls from trafficked persons, but these are not always a designated target group. What the reasons are for the limited calls of trafficked persons could not be identified by the study. The research team suggested that "possibly existing telephone helplines have not been publicised adequately to enable trafficked persons to call them or stated that there might be other reasons why persons trafficked do not call existing helplines".

The feasibility study further confirmed earlier presumptions that "to a large extent, all the different help lines are currently run independently from each other and referrals are not coordinated"<sup>100</sup>. This seems actually valid both for the national and international level. It was revealed that the various anti-trafficking organisations based in different countries, do meet on a regular basis, but in particular during national, European and international conferences or other events, and that they exchange experiences and work together in various projects, but there is no specific hotline cooperation. Most countries have no coordination structures that include hotline services; there is also no formal European organisation or body in existence that can speak on behalf of most European anti-trafficking NGOs. "The way anti-trafficking organisations relate to each other within a country varies from country to country. In some countries there are several telephone

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99 In 2008, calls of trafficked persons count for about 4.4 % of the total number of calls to the 5 helplines that provided more detailed figures on callers. In total 10 helplines provided detailed information on calls, but as some did not report fully, the information from 5 helplines could not be included in the comparison.

100 Response to the public call for consultation on identification of services of social value in Europe that could benefit from single European free phone numbers starting with 116 - in particular towards the consoling and lobby towards a European free phone number for services on trafficking in human beings in Europe, Amsterdam, 28th of September, 2007

helplines available to trafficked persons, which do not work together within any formal coordination structure. Similarly, the infrastructure for providing assistance to trafficked persons is reported to be well developed in some EU Member States and virtually non-existent in others. Referrals between one country and another are reported to depend to a great extent on personal contacts and knowledge', states the report<sup>101</sup>.

#### *Is an EU 116 hotline needed and feasible?*

For most respondents an EU-wide 116 number is not a first priority. But if such a helpline is created, the most important potential benefits they expect are increased awareness and visibility of the issue of trafficking in human beings and better access to help and information for trafficked persons and other (risk) groups. A 116 service would, states the research report, for example, offer the opportunity to organise publicity campaigns on an EU-wide basis and thereby achieve a greater impact. Respondents have noted that the introduction of a 116 number might contribute to increasing the services available to trafficked persons and improving their quality.

Further, there is wide recognition by respondents that in many EU Member States there is not a (or not an effective) national referral mechanism in place. Respondents expect that the creation of either a single helpline number at national level or a 116 number would help establish such a referral system, as the organisation running the telephone helpline would in practice become the centre of the referral system. In countries where a good infrastructure is in place, respondents stress the importance of a model for a 116-helpline that integrates existing structures and builds upon them.

Research results further show that respondents believe that not only trafficked persons as the primary target group may benefit from a 116 helpline, but also other target groups, in particular potential migrants and relatives of possibly trafficked persons as well as other (service) organisations for which the 116-line may function as a central information, expertise and referral point. Earlier La Strada International and the other NGOs stressed for the fact that helplines should serve a wider cross-section of women, men and children trafficked for various purposes and that no difference should be made for trafficking for exploitation in the sex industry and exploitation in other industries.

<sup>101</sup> Feasibility and assessment study on a European hotline for victims of trafficking in human beings, 2009

Although there is consensus that the 116 number should provide advice and assistance to people who have been trafficked, it is noted that, despite all the publicity about the issue of trafficking, many of those who have been trafficked do not identify themselves as “trafficked” or “trafficking victims”. This raises the question of whether the 116 service should target a wider group, such as exploited migrants in general. There are numerous suggestions made – reveals the study – on who should be expected to make calls to the 116 number. Approximately half of the respondents agree that a 116 helpline should be available to be used by a range of target groups: trafficked persons (migrant and national), relatives and friends of individuals, who might have been trafficked, prospective migrants, (undocumented) migrants in general, and women and men and children (migrant and national) in situations of violence, abuse or exploitation. While existing 116 lines point out that trafficked children aged below 18 could already secure assistance by contacting them, some existing anti-trafficking helplines noted that older adolescents contact them, possibly because they do not feel that a helpline for “children” is intended to benefit them.

#### *Conditions for an EU hotline, if established*

Respondents in general believed that a 116 number could only operate successfully if certain conditions are met and a need for common minimum standards was acknowledged, not only to guarantee quality of services, but also because the functioning of a 116-line in one country can affect the credibility of the 116-line in other countries. The organisation running a 116 helpline itself has to fulfil a wide range of requirements relating to professional ethics, infrastructure, services offered and staff. It is notable that most of the respondents do not currently meet these criteria. The research identified conditions on different levels, which need to be fulfilled for a 116 helpline to be beneficial to trafficked persons and possible other target groups. In this respect they mentioned that personal details revealed during calls must be kept confidential; 116 operators must be suitably trained and qualified; a solid referral system must be in place and there must be some potential to answer calls in languages other than the national language(s) spoken in the country concerned (i.e. multilingual services).

Some compelling reasons are cited for an organisation which is independent of the government and the police to run a 116 helpline for trafficked persons at national level. Significantly, it is not only respondents in NGOs who argue for this, but also in police agencies and ministries. However, there is recognition that a statutory organisation (funded by and accountable to the government) would probably face fewer difficulties in securing adequate finance to set up and run a 116 line than an NGO. Despite the consensus that an organisation running the

116 line needs to be seen (by trafficked persons and others) to be independent of the government and police, there is wide recognition that the organisation must have close links to relevant law enforcement agencies (working in a referral system with them) and that these would need to be formalised in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) or other legally binding document. Various other suggestions have been made on what criteria should be used for selecting an organisation to run the 116 service at national level.

Further a recurrent message from the respondents is the need for consistent, secure and long term funding for any organisation running a 116 number. A great deal of worry was expressed that the expense of both establishing and running the 116 number would be substantial and difficult to raise funds to pay for. In order to run a 116-number extensive funding will be needed. The European Commission itself has no budget to implement 116-numbers. Acquiring the necessary funding will put a considerable burden on anti-trafficking organisations that are interested in running the 116-number, especially in view of the fact that most anti trafficking helplines currently work on limited budgets with no structural funding.

There is less agreement on whether or not a 116 helpline needs to be answered on a 24/7 basis (i.e. a telephone line that has someone responding to calls all the time – 24 hours a day and seven days a week – rather than an answer phone where messages can be left). Differences also exist as to the toll free character of the helpline: most respondents are of the opinion that the helpline should be toll free, but a significant number has serious doubts, in particular with an eye to the expected increase of crank, abusive or silent calls.

The research report states further that the successful implementation of a 116-number for trafficked persons will partly on national organisations that can act as a motor behind the setting up of a 116 helpline on national level, as well as the development of a strong European umbrella organisation of anti-trafficking organisations/helplines, that can build up the necessary knowledge and contacts on the European level and work towards the development of joint minimum quality standards.

#### *How to proceed?*

The conclusions of the report state that a clear need for the establishment of a 116 helpline at this moment has not been identified, at least not for the immediate future. Not only as stated above, because respondents almost unanimously stress that certain conditions are to be fulfilled first for a 116 helpline to function properly in the future and to be beneficial for trafficked persons and other (risk

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groups. "It is not feasible to run a helpline on trafficking in human beings in all 27 members' states, as long as basic criteria and conditions are not fulfilled and as long as the gaps in the current situation, in particular with regard to infrastructure and available services for trafficked persons, are not addressed".<sup>102</sup>

Also as it is expected that the establishment of a 116 number would at this moment require additional human and financial resources that are not (made) available or that might even go at the expense of existing services for trafficked persons.

The researchers have concluded therefore that it is not advisable to establish a 116 number on trafficking in human beings at this moment, but rather first collect more reliable data on the need for a 116 helpline (in particular on the number and type of callers to existing helplines), and address the gaps in existing infrastructures and services for trafficked persons, in order to create a more sustainable basis for a later decision on the establishment of a 116 number.

It would be helpful if clearer data were available about the number of trafficked persons who call telephone helplines for emergency protection or assistance. Currently registration of data of callers is poor and lacks uniformity. Not only would it be useful to know who calls to existing numbers, also it would be advisable to identify and address the reasons why trafficked people do not call existing helplines before increasing the capacity of telephone helplines.

The majority of the respondents identify as a priority the overall establishment of more sustainable services for trafficked persons, including helpline referral services at the national level. Such services should meet basic standards and include emergency assistance, provisions to address basic needs of trafficked persons, accommodation/shelter and long and short term legal, medical and psycho-social support.

Furthermore respondents express the need to harmonise helplines services at the national level and ensure closer cooperation amongst them. Finally, if a 116 helpline were to be established, respondents stress that it should be integrated in existing structures and build upon them. It would therefore not be advisable to impose a single model throughout the EU on how a 116 helpline should be organised at national level, rather efforts should be made to avoid losing the benefits and expertise of existing anti-trafficking helplines and the services they make available. Opinions differ whether such helpline needs to be toll free and/or needs to operate 24/7. Particularly the last requirement is seen as something that can be realised on the long term.

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102 Feasibility and assessment study on a European hotline for victims of trafficking in human beings, 2009

*Preconditions for the creation and running of a 116 helpline*

At the time a 116 number is agreed, a set of minimum standards should be agreed upon concerning the (quality) standards which a 116 line should meet and the services which must be available, either directly from the organisation running the number or from other organisations working in the same referral system. A national infrastructure of services offered for trafficked persons, including a national referral system, has to be guaranteed in every country. At the moment services to trafficked persons which are available in some EU Member States are not available in others. Further there is a need for: Sustainable funding; Political will by governments and other relevant stakeholders; Sustainable and effective marketing of the number and EU cooperation and coordination among (potential) 116 helpline operators.

The research concludes that there is no clear need for a EU hotline now. It finds that establishing an EU hotline would only be feasible once a number of conditions are in place, which is not the case now. The study provides recommendations for further steps, in particular calls for further data collection and guarantee of basic conditions, like confidentiality of calls, professional and qualified operators, a solid referral system and multilingual services, next to sustainable funding, political will by governments and other relevant stakeholders and sustainable and effective marketing of the number. Further the report recommends the development of common minimum standards, a national infrastructure & referral system to be in place in every Member State and closer EU cooperation and coordination among (potential) 116 helpline operators.

What will happen now is still unclear, it is expected that the report will be further discussed by policy makers and decision makers at the national and international level, and will hopefully give enough food for thought. La Strada International is convinced that all stakeholders are needed in the discussion further and that countries should see how they can improve their national situation including the existing helpline services on trafficking in human beings. As for NGOs and their role, LSI thinks it is time to set own NGO standards of good practice for helpline services and welcomes further cooperation among existing operational helplines. At its last General Assembly meeting, the LSI Assembly has identified the need for strengthen the helpline services of the LS countries and plans to start hopefully with other helplines run by other NGOs, which might be a first step to closer future cooperation.







## Annex 1

### Indicators of Human Trafficking<sup>103</sup>

This tool lists some indicators of trafficking, both relating to general situations of trafficking and specific indicators pertaining to particular kind of exploitation.

Not all the indicators listed below are present in all situations involving trafficking in humans. Although the presence or absence of any of the indicators neither proves nor disproves that human trafficking is taking place, their presence should lead to investigation.

Victims of trafficking in humans can be found in a variety of situations. You can play a role in identifying such victims.

#### *General indicators*

People who have been trafficked may:

- Believe that they must work against their will
- Be unable to leave their work environment
- Show signs that their movements are being controlled
- Feel that they cannot leave
- Show fear or anxiety
- Be subjected to violence or threats of violence against themselves or against their family members and loved ones
- Suffer injuries that appear to be the result of an assault
- Suffer injuries or impairments typical of certain jobs or control measures
- Suffer injuries that appear to be the result of the application of control measures
- Be distrustful of the authorities
- Be threatened with being handed over to the authorities
- Be afraid of revealing their immigration status
- Not be in possession of their passports or other travel or identity documents, as those documents are being held by someone else
- Have false identity or travel documents
- Be found in or connected to a type of location likely to be used for exploiting people
- Be unfamiliar with the local language

<sup>103</sup> Indicators taken in full from *The Toolkit to Combat Trafficking in Persons*, UN Office on Drugs and Crime, Global Programme against Trafficking in Human Beings, source [www.unodc.org](http://www.unodc.org)

- Not know their home or work address
- Allow others to speak for them when addressed directly
- Act as if they were instructed by someone else
- Be forced to work under certain conditions
- Be disciplined through punishment
- Be unable to negotiate working conditions
- Receive little or no payment
- Have no access to their earnings
- Work excessively long hours over long periods
- Not have any days off
- Live in poor or substandard accommodations
- Have no access to medical care
- Have limited or no social interaction
- Have limited contact with their families or with people outside of their immediate environment
- Be unable to communicate freely with others
- Be under the perception that they are bonded by debt
- Be in a situation of dependence
- Come from a place known to be a source of human trafficking
- Have had the fees for their transport to the country of destination paid for by facilitators, whom they must payback by working or providing services in the destination
- Have acted on the basis of false promises

### *Children*

Children who have been trafficked may:

- Have no access to their parents or guardians
- Look intimidated and behave in a way that does not correspond with behaviour typical of children their age
- Have no friends of their own age outside of work
- Have no access to education
- Have no time for playing
- Live apart from other children and in substandard accommodations
- Eat apart from other members of the “family”

- Be given only leftovers to eat
- Be engaged in work that is not suitable for children
- Travel unaccompanied by adults
- Travel in groups with persons who are not relatives

The following might also indicate that children have been trafficked:

- The presence of child-sized clothing typically worn for doing manual or sex work
- The presence of toys, beds and children's clothing in inappropriate places such as brothels and factories
- The claim made by an adult that he or she has "found" an unaccompanied child
- The finding of unaccompanied children carrying telephone numbers for calling taxis
- The discovery of cases involving illegal adoption

### *Sexual exploitation*

People who have been trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation may:

- Be of any age, although the age may vary according to the location and the market
- Move from one brothel to the next or work in various locations
- Be escorted whenever they go to and return from work and other outside activities
- Have tattoos or other marks indicating "ownership" by their exploiters
- Work long hours or have few if any days off
- Sleep where they work
- Live or travel in a group, sometimes with other women who do not speak the same language
- Have very few items of clothing
- Have clothes that are mostly the kind typically worn for doing sex work
- Only know how to say sex-related words in the local language or in the language of the client group
- Have no cash of their own
- Be unable to show an identity document

The following might also indicate that children have been trafficked:

- There is evidence that suspected victims have had unprotected and/or violent sex.
- There is evidence that suspected victims cannot refuse unprotected and/or violent sex.
- There is evidence that a person has been bought and sold.
- There is evidence that groups of women are under the control of others.
- Advertisements are placed for brothels or similar places offering the services of women of a particular ethnicity or nationality.
- It is reported that sex workers provide services to a clientele of a particular ethnicity or nationality.
- It is reported by clients that sex workers do not smile.

### *Labour exploitation*

People who have been trafficked for the purpose of labour exploitation are typically made to work in sectors such as the following: agriculture, construction, entertainment, service industry and manufacturing (in sweatshops).

People who have been trafficked for labour exploitation may:

- Live in groups in the same place where they work and leave those premises infrequently, if at all
- Live in degraded, unsuitable places, such as in agricultural or industrial buildings
- Not be dressed adequately for the work they do: for example, they may lack protective equipment or warm clothing
- Be given only leftovers to eat
- Have no access to their earnings
- Have no labour contract
- Work excessively long hours
- Depend on their employer for a number of services, including work, transportation and accommodation
- Have no choice of accommodation
- Never leave the work premises without their employer
- Be unable to move freely
- Be subject to security measures designed to keep them on the work premises
- Be disciplined through fines
- Be subjected to insults, abuse, threats or violence
- Lack basic training and professional licences

The following might also indicate that people have been trafficked for labour exploitation:

- Notices have been posted in languages other than the local language.
- There are no health and safety notices.
- The employer or manager is unable to show the documents required for employing workers from other countries.
- The employer or manager is unable to show records of wages paid to workers.
- The health and safety equipment is of poor quality or is missing.
- Equipment is designed or has been modified so that it can be operated by children.
- There is evidence that labour laws are being breached.
- There is evidence that workers must pay for tools, food or accommodation or that those costs are being deducted from their wages.

### *Domestic servitude*

People who have been trafficked for the purpose of domestic servitude may:

- Live with a family
- Not eat with the rest of the family
- Have no private space
- Sleep in a shared or inappropriate space
- Be reported missing by their employer even though they are still living in their employer's house
- Never or rarely leave the house for social reasons
- Never leave the house without their employer
- Be given only leftovers to eat
- Be subjected to insults, abuse, threats or violence

### *Begging and petty crime*

People who have been trafficked for the purpose of begging or committing petty crimes may:

- Be children, elderly persons or disabled migrants who tend to beg in public places and on public transport
- Be children carrying and/or selling illicit drugs
- Have physical impairments that appear to be the result of mutilation

- Be children of the same nationality or ethnicity who move in large groups with only a few adults
- Be unaccompanied minors who have been “found” by an adult of the same nationality or ethnicity
- Move in groups while travelling on public transport: for example, they may walk up and down the length of trains
- Participate in the activities of organized criminal gangs
- Be part of large groups of children who have the same adult guardian
- Be punished if they do not collect or steal enough
- Live with members of their gang
- Travel with members of their gang to the country of destination
- Live, as gang members, with adults who are not their parents
- Move daily in large groups and over considerable distances

The following might also indicate that people have been trafficked for begging or for committing petty crimes:

- New forms of gang-related crime appear.
- There is evidence that the group of suspected victims has moved, over a period of time, through a number of countries.
- There is evidence that suspected victims have been involved in begging or in committing petty crimes in another country.

## Annex 2

### WHO ethical and safety recommendations for interviewing trafficked women<sup>104</sup>

Ten guiding principles to the ethical and safe conduct of interviews with women who have been trafficked:

#### **1. DO NO HARM**

Treat each woman and the situation as if the potential for harm is extreme until there is evidence to the contrary. Do not undertake any interview that will make a woman's situation worse in the short term or longer term.

#### **2. KNOW YOUR SUBJECT AND ASSESS THE RISKS**

Learn the risks associated with trafficking and each woman's case before undertaking an interview.

#### **3. PREPARE REFERRAL INFORMATION - DO NOT MAKE PROMISES THAT YOU CANNOT FULFILL**

Be prepared to provide information in a woman's native language and the local language (if different) about appropriate legal, health, shelter, social support and security services, and to help with referral, if requested.

#### **4. ADEQUATELY SELECT AND PREPARE INTERPRETERS AND CO-WORKERS**

Weigh the risks and benefits associated with employing interpreters, co-workers or others, and develop adequate methods for screening and training.

#### **5. ENSURE ANONYMITY AND CONFIDENTIALITY**

Protect a respondent's identity and confidentiality throughout the entire interview process – from the moment she is contacted through the time that details of her case are made public.

#### **6. GET INFORMED CONSENT**

Make certain that each respondent clearly understands the content and purpose of the interview, the intended use of the information, her right not to answer questions, her right to terminate the interview at any time, and her right to put restrictions on how the information is used.

<sup>104</sup> Source: World Health Organization, *WHO Ethical and Safety Recommendations for Interviewing Trafficked Women* (Geneva, 2003), <http://www.who.int/gender/documents/en/final%20recommendations%2023%20oct.pdf>

## **7. PUT INFORMATION COLLECTED TO GOOD USE**

Use information in a way that benefits an individual woman or that advances the development of good policies and interventions for trafficked women generally.

## **8. LISTEN TO AND RESPECT EACH WOMAN'S ASSESSMENT OF HER SITUATION AND RISKS TO HER SAFETY**

Recognize that each woman will have different concerns, and that the way she views her concerns may be different from how others might assess them.

## **9. DO NOT RE-TRAUMATIZE A WOMAN**

Do not ask questions intended to provoke an emotionally charged response. Be prepared to respond to a woman's distress and highlight her strengths.

## **10. BE PREPARED FOR EMERGENCY INTERVENTION**

Be prepared to respond if a woman says she is in imminent danger.

## **11. PUT INFORMATION COLLECTED TO GOOD USE**

Use information in a way that benefits an individual woman or that advances the development of good policies and interventions for trafficked women generally.

## Annex 3

### Some examples for SOS telephone conversations

#### 1. A prevention and educational call

May 2002 – Croupier training school

ASTRA: ASTRA, may I help you!

Client: Hello. I am not sure if this is the right number...

☆: Hello. Could you please tell me what is it all about and we'll see if we can help you?

C: I wanted to ask you something. I would like to know if it is possible to check agencies and ads offering a job? What they really mean? Is it something you can do?

☆: It is possible to check job offers to a certain level and our organization can do that. I would like to explain in a couple of words the checking procedure.

If it is an agency, we can check if the agency that offers employment, i.e. agency that is engaged in employment mediation has the license of the competent ministry. However, our experience has shown that the license does not guarantee agency's quality and that the contract offered by the agency to interested persons is the best indicator. Our legal team offers free legal support, which means: checking of the employment legislation of a certain country, checking of the mentioned employment contract and interpretation of the contract clauses.

Moreover, if an international job offer abroad is in question, we can check the agency, destination, i.e. certain location.

As far as ads are concerned, everything depends largely on the data available at the very start. Sometimes it is practically impossible to perform an investigation, while sometimes, on the other hand, very concrete data are available.

Have you found an interesting offer that you consider worthwhile checking?

C: Yes, and I need just the thing you've mentioned you can do, namely... Two weeks ago I found in the Advertisements an interesting ad for a croupier training school in xxxx. The ad was very short, practically no information at all, it was mentioned only what kind of training is in question and the phone number 00999 555 7777.

☆: Have you dialled the number?

C: Yes, and the man who is organizing the whole thing, answered the phone. He is from Serbia and is living in XXX. He told me that after the croupier training I can work in a casino in the Hotel Panorama he manages and that my salary would be about 1,000 Euros.

☆: Do you have any other data of the man you talked to?

C: Yes, he told me his name is M.K.. He gave me his address: XX 14.

☆: You mentioned that he offered you a job in some hotel. Do you know the name of the hotel, who is the owner, where is the hotel found?

C: He told me that the name of the hotel is "Panorama". I think he is the owner, but I am not sure any more, it sounded like that, as if he makes decisions and so on, so I assumed that he is the owner... Honestly, I don't know. I think that the hotel is in XXX although I didn't ask him, somehow it went without saying.

☆: He didn't tell you anything about the job, did he?

C: Well, he said that the working conditions are fantastic, that all the girls who work for him have never complained.

☆: Can you remember if during your conversation he mentioned some other information, such as the names of his associates, did he mention some other city?

C: Well, I can only remember that he mentioned that he owned a hotel and construction sites. I know that I thought it strange because if one owns all that he should not leave the number of his mobile phone in the newspapers just like that. I think that major companies look for employees in some other way.

☆: Yes, it could be suspicious, but it doesn't necessarily mean that it is a fraud or trafficking in human beings.

C: I have this impression too, I am just not sure. I would like, if it is possible, to check authenticity of this offer, is it possible that the croupier salaries are that high and if that man is really engaged in such activities, or is it a disguise for something else!

☆: Have you left your name, contact, any data?

C: No, I just told him from which country I am calling, and I hid my mobile number so he could not see it. He asked me about my name and I told him that I called just to get some quick information and I did not answer.

★: It is good that you left no data. It is the first step to avoid possible problems: do not give personal data to unknown persons.

What we can do about this is to check through an organization in XXX we cooperate with, all given data.

You should know that if you want to go, after all these checks, to XXX that you should have all the useful telephone numbers (Embassy/Consulate, NGO and similar), information on additional security measures to be undertaken, and it is possible to maintain a frequent telephone contact with us in the first period of your stay abroad. However, we'll talk about it later when we have more concrete information.

If you wish, you may leave your contact phone number, and we will let you know as soon as we find out something new or you could call us in a few days. So, you are free to stay anonymous, i.e. it is not necessary to give us your personal data.

C: No problem, I will give you my phone number. My fixed telephone number is 566XXXX, and I will give you my mobile phone number 06X XXX XXX. Sorry, I haven't even told you my name. My name is XXXXXX, I am calling from XXXXX. Do you need anything else?

★: No, it's OK, thanks! So, the moment we learn something more about it, we'll let you know. Otherwise, your data are protected and we will not disclose personal information to anyone and we will keep them confident.

XXXXXX, could you tell me how you got our telephone number? I would like to explain this, we pose this question to everybody who gives us a call, because it is very important for us to gather information on the way people get our phone number, so we could develop our campaigns in the right direction and plan our activities.

C: A friend gave me your number, she found it on the internet. And I think that she knows about you because her mother participated in your forum, where you, inter alia, discussed the topic.

★: OK, XXXXX, thank you very much. It's settled then, as soon as we get some feedback, we will contact you. And, don't hesitate to call us if you want to know if something new happens. I must tell you that sometimes we get feedback very quickly, but sometimes it takes time, so patience is necessary.

C: It's OK! I just don't want to pursue it blindly and get in trouble. Thank you very much, we'll keep in touch!

We contact our partners from the NGO network and furnish details on the ad about the croupier training and concrete offer for a job in a casino. We get feedback very

quickly and we promptly inform our client that the aforementioned man is not a hotel owner, that he does not live at the address he cited, nor is his residence registered there, and the most important thing: Hotel "Panorama" he mentioned has no casino at all!

## **2. A call directly connected with trafficking in human beings**

*April 2XXX – Dirty trade*

ASTRA: ASTRA, may I help you!

Client: Hello. XXXX speaking! My daughter disappeared. My friend is a teacher in the school where you organized training courses, and he told me that you might be able to help and he gave me your phone number. My daughter disappeared without a trace.

★: It must be very difficult for you. Please tell me where are you calling from?

C: From Belgrade, we live in Belgrade.

★: I assume that you have reported her disappearance to the police?

C: We did it right away, the moment we realized that she is missing. Since she is under age, her case is conducted by the police department targeting minor delinquency.

★: It is crucial, because without reporting a missing person to the police, no procedure can be undertaken. What is the name of the inspector in charge of the case, i.e. who is your contact person?

C: The case is conducted by inspector XXXXX. I have his mobile phone number and his office phone number.

★: OK. We know the inspector, we have collaborated before and we already have all his phone numbers. Now please, tell me everything concerning your daughter's disappearance. How did it all happen?

C: Well, we do not have much information, only what we have succeeded to gather these days... She has been missing for exactly three days now, and she has not contacted a single person ever since. She went out to meet some friends, she did not take anything with her. Only her mobile phone, but then she never leaves her mobile phone.

☆: When did you suspect that something went wrong?

C: On working days, she doesn't stay late after 11 p.m. because she likes to have a good night's sleep. She is a good kid, doesn't go out much, sometimes with her friends. She lives with her mother. We are divorced. My ex-wife waited for her to come till midnight, she thought she hanged out with her friends and didn't want to disturb her. We have never had any problems with her, she is a child actually...

☆: Did she succeed to talk to her when she called her around midnight?

C: No, she was already unavailable by then.

☆: And at what time did she leave home?

C: Around 7 p.m., maybe 7.30 p.m.

☆: I must know all the details, because if we agree to inform other organizations and services, we must furnish them with all details. This is the reason why I have so many questions for you.

C: OK, just tell me what you need. You can talk to my ex-wife as well, but I think that she doesn't know much either. But I will still give you her phone number.

☆: You better give her our phone number so she could call us any time if she has some news or to inform herself if we know something more. Have you any other information on the evening when your daughter left home? For instance, who was she supposed to meet?

C: We talked to all her friends. She was not supposed to meet any of them. They are good kids and they are frightened. And there is something that her mother and myself didn't know, but her best friend told us, that she recently started hanging out with a boyfriend who invited her to come to Italy as an au pair and take care of children.

☆: Have you any information on that boy, what is his name, maybe contact phone, where is he from...?

C: The girl who told us about him never met him, but she was present a couple of times when he came to pick up XXXX, my daughter, with a car. The child didn't know the car make, but she remembered the license plate number, it seems that it was a car bearing foreign registration plates. She told everything to the police, they should be able to locate him by this number. The guy's name is A., he said he was born in Italy, he is 25.

☆: Does he live in Serbia now or he just came for a visit?

C: They don't know, but it seems that they were seeing each other a little more than a month, not longer, but I assume that he came for a visit. My daughter's friends say that they have met in front of her school, literally in front of a food booth where the children go for a snack. I don't know if he lives somewhere near the school or he came there on purpose... I don't know...

☆: OK. Did she maybe reveal her friend some details regarding her trip to Italy? Some more precise data on where was she supposed to live in Italy, town, city, region, where would she stay, whose kids would she take care of?

C: No, it seems that he instructed her not to tell anything to anyone, she wouldn't say anything, even to her best friend. She said that my daughter told her that she would send her a picture postcard and that she seemed very happy a few days before her disappearance. She probably fell in love with the rascal, I don't know...

☆: Tell me, did you notice any changes, was everything like usual recently or...?

C: You know, I divorced my wife about a year ago, but our relationship is correct, although my daughter suffered a lot. She is very sensitive and I think that my wife tolerated her a lot. Her school performance deteriorated but she was not absent from school. She has withdrawn into herself recently. We thought that she will be over it soon, that she has entered puberty, that she had enough reports to do ... We did not press her to tell us what is bothering her.

☆: We are going to send a communication to relevant organizations, please give us general data, such as name, personal number. She has no identity card or passport?

C: No, she doesn't. Her personal data are.....

☆: We are going to need some of your personal data too. Your name, address and contact phone number.

C: My personal data are.....

☆: Does your daughter have any specific or distinguishing body marks: scars, tattooing, piercing, specific moles?

C: No, nothing of the kind.

☆: OK, we'll get in contact with your wife and we'll ask her about details, I hope this is not a problem?

C: I should say not, check with her please, they are very close.

★: Could you send us her latest photo, by e-mail preferably? It would also be good if you could send us 2 photos: a whole figure photo and a portrait.

C: That won't be a problem, can I send the photos to the mail address on your website?!

★: Of course, it's our e-mail address. And something more, are these recent pictures that will show how she looked like on the day of her disappearance?

C: Yes, it is a picture taken a month ago, on her cousin's birthday party. She looks exactly the same.

★: One more detail, what is her height, it is not information that you can get just looking at a photo?

C: XXX cm.

★: Thank you for all information. We know that it is not easy to repeat what happened over and over again, but all you said is for a good reason, the more details we have, there is more chance that someone will recognize her. We will contact all our associates in Italy and in countries on the way to I. We will forward data on XXXX and her photos so she could be recognized if she appears on a border crossing. We will ask our colleagues to promptly forward information to the police.

On the other hand, we cannot promise you anything. Time is the most important element. Of course, we will stay in contact and whoever gets new information first should contact the other side and keep it posted.

C: Of course, my mobile phone number is 06X XXX XXX. I will tell XXXX mother to call you.

★: Since we have an emergency here, please write down our office mobile phone number: 065 33 47 817. It is available 24/7, and if it is necessary you can contact me after working hours as well.

C: Excellent, I've written it down. I will call you as soon as I found out something new  
Goodbye.

★: Goodbye.

## Annex 4

# ASTRA SOS HOTLINE CONSULTANT TRAINING

### THEMES:

#### ***Day 1***

Presenting the program, participants and ASTRA

History of the women's movement, role and importance of feminism in a modern society

Women's rights and gender equality

Position and rights of minorities

#### ***Day 2***

Violence: Types of Violence, Circle of Violence

Sexual violence: harassment, blackmail, rape, incest

Workshop

Language and terminology – language as a means of discrimination

#### ***Day 3***

Trafficking in human beings and its forms, legislation

Difference between human trafficking, people smuggling and prostitution

Who are the victims? Who are the traffickers?

Phases of human trafficking: recruitment, transport, exploitation

Conditions the victim lives in

Way out from the trafficking chain

Consequences encountered by the victim and necessary assistance

The psychology of the victim psychology

Situation in Serbia: National Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings,

Institutions, NGO, international organizations

Problems in practice, what we have done, what is still to be done

Child's rights and trafficking in children in the context of violating the rights of the child

#### ***Day 4***

Principles of working on SOS hotline

Active listening

Workshop – Role play with active listening

Role play with conversation volunteer - client

Specific characteristics of working on a trafficking helpline

Keeping records ASTRA SOS Hotline statistics

Types of assistance, contacts and procedures on ASTRA SOS Hotline

Exercise: how to make an official letter

#### ***Day 5***

Daily Centre

Victim identification

Questions and answers

Influence of NGOs and institutions the position and protection of women – the development of mutual respect and cooperation

Evaluation and training wrap-up

Information on further contact

## Annex 5

### ASTRA SOS Hotline and Victim Assistance Program - job description of team members

#### **COORDINATOR**

##### Qualifications:

- Ability and willingness to manage the project under minimal supervision;
- Ability to present and explain ideas to the ASTRA team clearly;
- Authentic concern for human goals as well as readiness to work in a multicultural environment;
- Communication skills;
- Ability to manage in crisis situations;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills in Serbian and English;
- Ability to work in a team;
- Ability to undertake responsibility and decision making;
- Ability to manage human resources;
- Organizational skills;
- Computer skills (MS Office, Internet).

##### Description of duties:

- Assisting the ASTRA Management in fulfilling strategic goals of the organization;
- Organizing regularly the SOS Team meetings;
- Responsibility for the implementation of all activities for the project realization in compliance with the planned time schedule;
- Efficient involvement of all available resources for implementing activities within the program;
- Close cooperation with the team members and expert collaborators within fulfilment of the ASTRA goals;
- Management and supervision of the overall program implementation;
- Acquainting new members with the working procedures on the SOS Hotline and in the Daily Center;
- Cooperation with the financial service and expenditure planning within the programme budget;

- Delegation of duties and team motivation;
- Travelling according to the programme needs;
- Reporting to donors, other program coordinators and ASTRA Management on the program activities;
- Continuing improvement and development of all the programme aspects;
- Presentation of work to all stakeholder groups;
- Networking and creating material in cooperation with the other ASTRA Team members;
- Identifying and organizing work of the expert collaborators;
- Promotion of the program in cooperation with the ASTRA PR Team and the plan of distribution of promotional materials;
- Continuing education and informing on trends in the field of the SOS Hotline and direct victim assistance;
- Program monitoring and evaluation;
- Periodical acceptance of ad-hoc duties as and when required by the ASTRA Management.

### ***TEAM MEMBER***

#### Qualifications:

- Authentic concern for human goals as well as readiness to work in a multicultural environment;
- High sensitivity to victims issues and high professionalism;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills;
- Ability to manage in crisis situations;
- Ability to work in a team;
- Organizational skills;
- Ability to make decisions on the fly and in short-term deadlines;
- Ability of active listening and empathy;
- Accurateness and preciseness in handling documentation;
- Flexibility at work and regarding working hours;
- Excellent knowledge of English and computer skills.

#### Description of duties:

- Assisting the Program Coordinator in implementing all activities included by the programme;

- Strict observance of the SOS Hotline and Daily Center procedures;
- Regular updating of the database;
- Efficient involvement of all available resources for implementing activities within the programme;
- Close cooperation with the team members for fulfilment of the programme goals;
- Acquainting new members with the working procedures on the SOS Hotline and in the Daily Center;
- Monitoring concrete cases;
- Accurate, timely and precise recording of data on each individual client;
- Continuing work with the clients;
- Assessment of the needs of the clients of SOS Hotline and Daily Center;
- Travelling according to the programme needs;
- Field work;
- Logistics and research work within the program;
- Proposing improvements and developing all program aspects;
- Networking;
- Creating material in cooperation with the other ASTRA Team members;
- Periodical acceptance of ad-hoc duties as and when required by the Program Coordinator and the ASTRA Management.

### ***ASTRA DAILY CENTER CONSULTANT***

#### Qualifications:

- Authentic concern for human goals as well as readiness to work in a multicultural environment;
- High sensitivity to victims' issues and high professionalism;
- Excellent verbal and written communication skills;
- Ability to manage in crisis situations;
- Ability to work in a team;
- Organizational skills;
- Ability to make decisions on the fly and in short-term deadlines;
- Ability of active listening and empathy;
- Accurateness and preciseness in handling documentation;
- Flexibility at work and regarding working hours, observing time limits;

- Willingness to participate in professional training;
- Proactive relationship towards new contents and activities within the Daily Centre.

#### Description of duties:

- Permanent coordination and collaboration with all persons engaged in the ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program in order to perceive all the cases. Attending regular meetings related to the Program;
- Accurate, timely and precise recording of visits and all relevant data regarding the Daily Center activities;
- Accurate, timely and precise recording of all relevant data regarding the clients of the Daily Center;
- Organizing and monitoring activities in the Daily Center;
- Close cooperation with experts engaged in work with the clients within the Daily Center program and regular gathering of their reports;
- Scheduling meetings with lawyers, psychologists and other expert collaborators;
- Responsibility to prepare and arrange the premises and provide funds necessary for maintaining regular activities in the Daily Center;
- Continuing work with the clients within the Daily Center program;
- Assessment of the needs of the clients of the Daily Center and proposing activities related to the center;
- Proposing improvements and developing all aspects of the Daily Center program;
- Implementation of the Daily Center procedures;
- Participation in creating promotional material for the Daily Center;
- Regular updating of the SOS database;
- Attending the SOS supervision;
- Reporting to the Program Coordinator on undertaken activities and events in the Daily Center;
- Making reports on the Daily Center for the donors;
- Periodical acceptance of ad-hoc duties as and when required by the Program Coordinator and the ASTRA Management.

# Annex 6



## ASTRA – Records of calls, visits and field actions

**Call No.**

- Date: \_\_/\_\_/\_\_
- Time: \_\_:\_\_
- ASTRA contacted by: \_\_\_\_\_
- First time  Repeated
- Reason:
  1. Directly related to human trafficking
    - a. Post festum b. Post festum 2 c. \_\_\_\_\_
  2. Prevention and educational \_\_\_\_\_
  3. Other \_\_\_\_\_

**Consultant**

- Contact with ASTRA made by:
  - Phone call
  - Visit
  - Action in the field
  - Call registered on the phone machine
  - e-mail
  - fax
  - Mail
- Contacted before ASTRA: \_\_\_\_\_

### CLIENT – TRAFFICKER QUESTIONNAIRE

- Name \_\_\_\_\_
- Phone \_\_\_\_\_
- Document No. \_\_\_\_\_
- Club \_\_\_\_\_
- Address \_\_\_\_\_
- Age \_\_\_\_\_
- Citizenship \_\_\_\_\_
- Marital status \_\_\_\_\_
- Children \_\_\_\_\_

- Type of exploitation \_\_\_\_\_
- Country of destination \_\_\_\_\_
- Victim-trafficker relationship \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
**SAVED IN:**

### ASTRA'S INTERVENTION:

- Informative conversation
- Supporting conversation
- Action in the field: Where: \_\_\_\_\_
- Provided assistance:
  1. psychological
  2. legal
  3. medical
  4. technical
  5. material
- NOTE

- Referred to an institution:
  - a. Coordination service
  - b. Police
  - c. Social welfare center
  - d. Ministry/ies
  - e. Medical institution
  - f. Other
- Referred to a lawyer
- Referred to Shelter
- Referred to another NGO

## Annex 7

### ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program March 2002 – December 2009

Between 1 March 2002 and 31 December 2009, a total of 10,227 calls were received from 2,131 clients. Of those, 314 were trafficking victims, with 189 adults and 125 children.

ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program is implemented through:  
Basic – primary activities:

- I. SOS hotline calls
- II. Direct assistance to trafficking victims
- III. SOS hotline database
- IV. Reintegration program

Other – secondary activities:

- V. V. Contact with institutions
- VI. Contact with partner organizations in Serbia and abroad

ASTRA SOS Hotline at (+318) 011 3374 817 is available every day from 9 AM to 6 PM. Apart from this number, the 0800 101 201 telephone line was also introduced, free of charge for clients dialing from within the territory of the Republic of Serbia. For field activities conducted outside the ASTRA SOS Hotline working hours and for emergencies, ASTRA SOS Hotline consultants are accessible through the special mobile telephone number (+318) 065 3374 817.

#### 2009

- ASTRA received **1,577** calls by **323** clients through the SOS Hotline. Of this number, **34** trafficking victims were identified and provided with medical, legal and psychological assistance.

#### 2008

- ASTRA received **1,277** calls by **546** clients through the SOS Hotline. Of this number, **16** trafficking victims were identified and provided with medical, legal and psychological assistance.

## 2007

- ASTRA received **1,702** calls by **657** clients through the SOS Hotline. Of this number, **25** trafficking victims were identified and provided with medical, legal and psychological assistance.

## 2006

- ASTRA received **1,835** calls by **410** clients through the SOS Hotline. Of this number, **44** trafficking victims were identified and provided with medical, legal and psychological assistance.

## 2005

- ASTRA received **1,788** calls by **487** clients through the SOS Hotline. Of this number, **64** trafficking victims were identified and provided with medical, legal and psychological assistance.

## 2004

- ASTRA received **953** calls by **257** clients through the SOS Hotline. Of this number, **65** trafficking victims were identified and provided with medical, legal and psychological assistance.

## 2003

- ASTRA received **662** calls by **203** clients through the SOS Hotline. Of this number, **30** trafficking victims were identified and provided with medical, legal and psychological assistance.

## 2002

- ASTRA SOS Hotline was opened in March 2002, in parallel with the “Open Your Eyes” campaign. During its first year of operations, **433** calls were received from **320** clients, and assistance was rendered for 32 victims of trafficking.

## I Hotline Calls

From the first call in March 2002 to December 2009, a total of **10,227** calls were received from **2,131** clients.

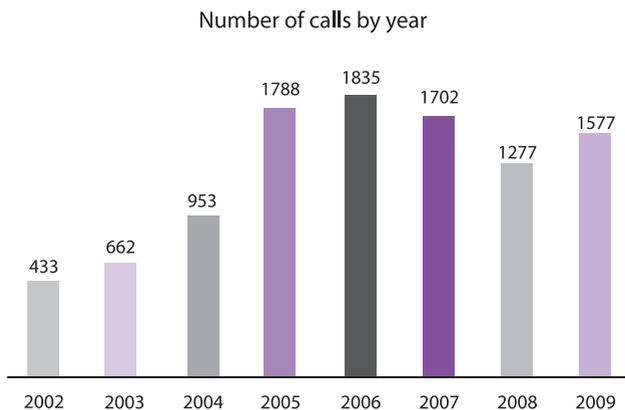


Chart 1

Analyzing the call frequencies on Chart 1, a sudden increase in the number of calls can be noted in 2005, with the frequency holding throughout 2006 and 2007. Compared to the period of 2004-2005, the number of contacts established through ASTRA SOS Hotline increased by **29.04%** (compared to 2002-2003, the number of calls is more than triple).

This data is very indicative of the link between the number of calls to ASTRA SOS Hotline and the overall campaigns ASTRA implemented in the years prior. The “Child Trafficking – Our Reality” campaign was implemented in 2006 with the support of Save the Children UK. Following the campaign, in November, a **40.3%** increase in child-related calls was noted.

After a two year break, the “Naked Facts” campaign was conducted in 2008.

Number of calls by month in 2008

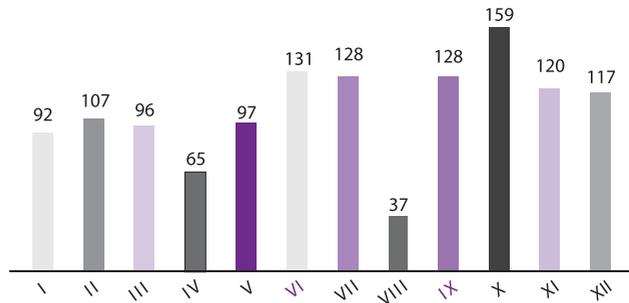


Chart 2

This was the fifth anti-trafficking campaign implemented by ASTRA since its inception. The goal of the campaign was to remind the public and institutions that the trafficking problem is still present in our country. The first part of the campaign that ran in June 2008 was aimed at preventing the problem and the most frequent methods of recruiting. It carried the message GET INFORMED, because informed and aware citizens are less likely to be caught in the traps and shady offers of traffickers. The second part of the campaign was initiated in late September with the message REPORT! The aim was to stimulate citizens to take a proactive stance and report possible findings and suspicions.

Chart 2 marks the number of calls in 2008. The increase in their numbers is visible in the months during the campaigns and immediately after. The presence of ASTRA in media and the attractive campaign materials influenced another increase in the number of calls.

At an annual level, rhythmic oscillation is present as a consequence of seasonal migration. During the months of spring, there is increased interest in seasonal work at plantations, agricultural properties and construction companies, made all the more enticing if they are located in attractive tourist destinations. An increase in the number of calls regarding traveling abroad is also notable during the March-June period and near the end of the year. The most frequent reason is seeking employment, while lately numerous programs were developed offering simultaneous work and study, an extremely enticing prospect for youth in our country.

As expected, a reduced number of clients turn to us for assistance, support or information during the later periods, i.e. during and after summer, due to the scarcity in offers for available employment at the end of the tourist season, when summer vacations end and regular workplace and educational obligations recur.

Chart 3 shows the number of new clients contacting us every year on the SOS Hotline.

Number of new clients annually

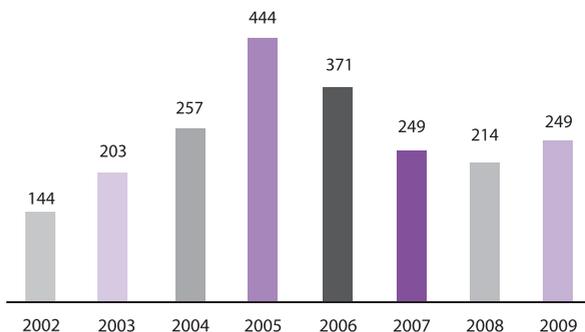


Chart 3

In the total number of calls during this period, the most frequent was direct contact with clients (around **50%**), followed by contacts with institutions (approximately **15%**) and parents (**10%**). Another 10% of the calls to ASTRA were from non-government organizations and friends, **5%** were relatives or partners of trafficking victims, while citizen calls stand for **3%** of the total number of calls. Apart from this, around 5% of the contacts made were with professionals assisting victims or in contact with the victims for various reasons (psychologist, attorney). There were **two** cases where the traffickers themselves contacted us through the Hotline, seeking information on the victim's location aiming to influence them, which was to be expected, especially during investigations and subsequently, during trials.

Of the **10,227** calls received in 2002-2009, **7,965** were initiated by female persons, while in **2,262 (22%)** of the cases ASTRA was contacted by a male person.

### CALL STRUCTURE

During the past eight years, a total of **10,227** calls were received on ASTRA SOS Hotline, sorted into three basic categories as shown on Chart 4.

Types of calls

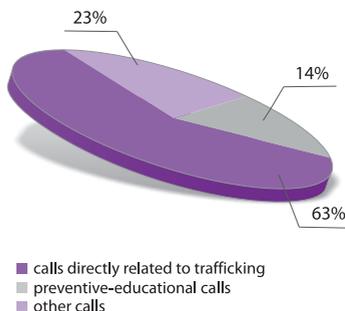


Chart 4

The first group are calls directly related to trafficking in human beings (Chart 5), representing **63%** of the total number of calls during the reporting period. The second group are calls that are preventive-educational in nature (Chart 6) – **14%**, while the third group represents other calls (Chart 7), with a total share of **23%**.

Calls directly related to trafficking

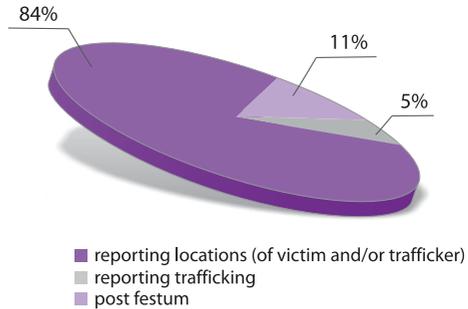


Chart 5

The group of calls directly related to trafficking in human beings is comprised of *reporting trafficking* – a total of **11%** of calls received, *reporting the location of the victim and/or trafficker* – **5%**, as well as *post festum* calls, which are the most frequent at **84%**.

The *number*, or percent of *reports on the location of the victim or trafficker*, relative to the number of calls in the category directly related to trafficking has decreased in recent years, possibly indicating a change in the *modus operandi* of traffickers (witness reports by our clients indicate that, while previously girls were subject to physical abuse in bars where they were forced to engage in prostitution, today, the owners of these bars use more subtle methods of control and coercion, therefore police officers and citizens reporting these cases find it harder to obtain information on potential trafficking victims). Similarly to the total number of incoming calls, the lack of a campaign certainly influenced the frequency of calls wherein victims and/or traffickers are reported, especially having in mind that those calls are most often made by citizens.

The third type, so called *post festum* calls, represent contact established with persons that were successful in liberating themselves from the trafficking chain and are being provided with various types of assistance (medical, psychological, legal, material, etc.) and support through partaking in the Daily Center program. The number of calls from this group during the 2006-2007 period, as opposed to the previous period,

grew extensively, by 82.44%. During the first four years of operation, ASTRA SOS Hotline identified 191 victims of trafficking, therefore all contact established with those persons in 2006 and 2007 was labeled as *post festum* calls. Considering the fact that ASTRA programs place special emphasis on activities intended for victims in the recovery phase and that we remain in contact with them for a long time following their exit from the trafficking chain, it is certain that the number of *post festum* calls will increase annually, in proportion to the number of clients included in the ASTRA reintegration program. This trend is to be expected since the array of services on offer for our clients undergoing reintegration was significantly expanded.

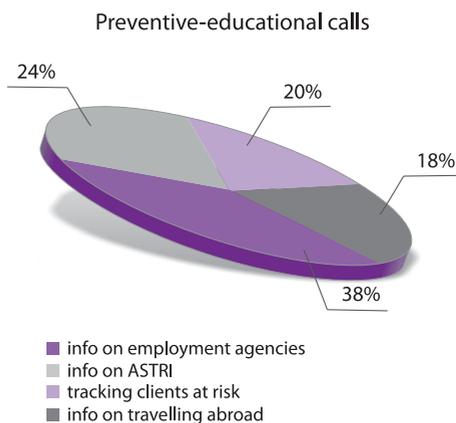


Chart 6

Of the total number of calls, 14% were within the preventive-educational group of calls. Of this number, 24% of the calls were for information on ASTRA, 18% were for information on travelling abroad, 40% were for information on employment agencies, and 20% on potential victims, i.e. persons in risky environments.

A certain number of citizens, mostly youth, turn to us for *information on ASTRA*. These calls made up 24% of the total number, and they were mostly about the possibility of volunteering, as well as seeking information on the programs and activities of ASTRA.

Similar to previous years, most of the calls (38%) in the preventive-educational group represent persons checking on *employment agencies* both in the country and abroad. During the years, calls in this category were, on the one hand, aimed at checking offers for au pair and catering employment, work for models and photo models, where mostly girls are sought, and on the other hand, seasonal work on plantations and farms, in construction and on oil rigs, mostly seeking men. With these types of calls

ASTRA provides the following services: information on possession of a license to work issued to the employment agencies by the Ministry of Economy and Regional Development (formerly issued by the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy), legal analysis of the written contract, with special care given to clauses which might be detrimental to the client. Additional legal consultation with lawyers employed by ASTRA is possible to this end. Often, the destination is checked as well (information on the employer, company or school), along with providing and checking data on the agency or company representing the employer in Serbia. Lack of legal regulations in the field of *au pair* program offers, presented as part of the activities of tourist agencies that are not registered as job brokering agencies, further complicates the issue of the quality of their work, since it leaves room for, at the least, lucrative business for agencies, and often fraud as well. Therefore adequate legal measures need to be defined in this field as part of the general framework of measures for preventing trafficking in women.

Calls for *information on legal travel abroad* for study or other purposes contributed to **18%** of the calls in this category. Clients that call us for this reason are introduced to the entire process of preparations for travelling abroad in detail (information on preparing the documents, procedures, visa regimes, embassy and consulate contacts in the foreign country, potentially useful non-government organizations in the destination country) and, if necessary and at the client's request, contact is maintained with them during their stay abroad, up to the moment it is certain that their safety is not in jeopardy.

A total of 20% of the calls in the preventive-educational group were calls about potential trafficking victims, or persons under risk. In most cases, these calls include risky and/or criminally conducive environments with the presence of people known to be involved in trafficking or close to those circles, where an adult or underage person is present, thus the situation is threatening in the sense of potential danger of entry into the chain of trafficking in human beings/children. Tracking clients under risk is achieved through ASTRA SOS Hotline, but also through their inclusion in various Daily Center activities. Since these are often persons living in harsh financial conditions, with no access to the educational or healthcare system, subject to some form of violence or neglect, necessary measures of protection and support need to be undertaken, and they need to be included in programs for education and economic empowerment, and be provided with medical and psychological assistance, included in the social protection system, etc.

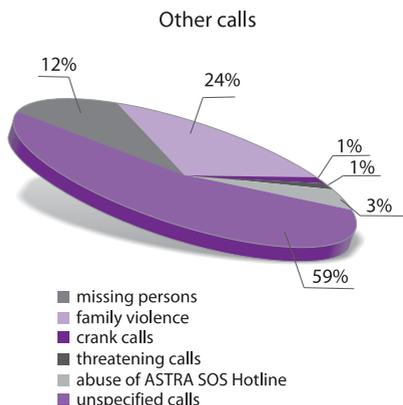


Chart 7

Of the total number, **24%** are „other calls“. A large number of unspecified calls is noted in this group, amounting to **59%**. This category is rather wide, since it includes all citizen calls on various issues they were unable to solve with the aid of institutions, and do not know whom to turn to or whose competency these issues represent. In most of these cases clients are referred to specialized services or non-government organizations that could possibly provide them with assistance or information. A certain number of calls in this group relate to contact with victims of trafficking, however these contacts, by their nature, are no longer related to the problem of trafficking, or the reintegration and monitoring program of ASTRA. In these calls clients turn to us for potential assistance or support in solving their current problems, and we refer them to other organizations or persons that might be of assistance.

A total of **24%** of the calls received are on the subject of *family violence*. ASTRA's intervention includes providing support to victims of family violence and establishing contact with competent institutions, as well as non-government organizations primarily oriented towards this specific type of problem that the clients did not have contact with previously.

The subcategory of *missing person* reports in the other calls category accounts for **12%** of the calls received and they relate to the disappearance of adult persons that did not disappear in war zones. There is a large number of organizations dealing with disappearances of children, but when dealing with persons of age, the situation is vastly different both in our country and Europe in general. The Red Cross Federation is partially engaged on the problem of disappearances in war zones, but apart from this, families of missing persons are completely reliant on the police conducting further investigations in cooperation with Interpol. Even though the circumstances mostly do not indicate that these cases are trafficking, having in mind that the family finds it difficult to

find support in existing services and non-government organizations, ASTRA support is primarily aimed at securing contacts and technical support.

We have also noted attempts at *abusing* the services provided by the ASTRA SOS Hotline. These calls make up 3% of the calls in this subgroup. Two calls were made by traffickers attempting to find out the location of their victims during the investigatory process, presumably to influence them to change their statements. Likewise, there were attempts to contact ASTRA in order to present the victim as a person inclined to commit criminal acts, thus discrediting them personally, along with their statement.

During 2002-2009, **14 (1%) threatening** and **15 (1%) crank** calls were received. Threatening calls occur immediately after the victim is identified and are often most intensive in the period leading up to, and during the trial. They are made by traffickers, their friends, relatives or attorneys representing them.

## II Direct Victim Assistance

ASTRA SOS Hotline identified **314** victims during the period of March 2002 – December 2009. Similar to the number and structure of calls received in the previous period, victim identification was largely dependent on the visibility of ASTRA and the availability of information on ASTRA SOS Hotline and services available through it.

In 2002 and 2003 recruiting children was not recognized as a current trend in the field of trafficking (2002-2003 – **10%**, 2004-2005 – **44%**). According to data from ASTRA SOS Hotline, a high percentage of children in the total number of victims identified at an annual level was registered in 2004 – **41** children, or **63.07%** of the total number of victims in this year. In 2005 there were **18** underage victims identified (**30.51%**), representing a decline against the previous year, but still a very indicative number.

The percentage of children in the total number of identified trafficking victims from 2005 did not vary significantly in the following two years. In **2006** and **2007**, children were still highly represented at **47.7% (21)** and **40% (10)**, respectively. At a two-year level, the high percentage of children identified in 2004-2005 remained, amounting to **46.51%** at this time.

During **2008** and **2009**, a total of 21 children were identified, representing 38.88% of the total number of victims identified during this period. Therefore, an extremely high portion of the victims in the trafficking chain are children, with the numbers showing a minor increase against previous years.

**Chart 8** shows the ratio of children and adult victims for the 2002-2009 period.

Age of Trafficking Victims Identified

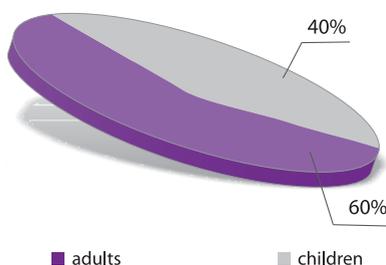


Chart 8

Observed as a general trend, this problem falls into the focus of other anti-trafficking actors, but no specific assistance and reintegration programs were developed intended for children. In the meantime, institutions were educated in recognizing (potential) trafficking victims, therefore strengthening response capacities for the frequent trafficking in children might be one of the reasons in the increase of juveniles in the total number of victims identified. These potential explanations are not mutually exclusive, but they also offer a different perspective of the focus of trafficking groups on children as a particularly vulnerable category.

Of the **314** trafficking victims identified by ASTRA during the eight years of its operation, **26** of them (**8%**) were male persons, while in **288** cases they were girls or women. Of the total number of identified male trafficking victims, **12** were boys, i.e. persons younger than 18 years of age. Women are a considerably more frequent target for traffickers. This is a consequence of the still intense influence of gender stereotypes, discrimination in the labor market and social factors additionally threatening the socially disadvantaged position of women in times of crisis. Should we approach this issue from another perspective, and having in mind that trafficking in men is specific, especially in regards of the forms of recruitment and exploitation they are prone to, we find that there are no separate programs for male trafficking victims, which might be a reason for their lesser presence in the total number of identified victims.

However, in no way should this represent a signal for shifting the focus off the gender aspect of trafficking.

The number of citizens of Serbia in the total number of identified victims has been on the increase since 2002: in 2002-2003 – **61%**, in 2004-2005 – **71.11%**, in 2006-2007 the percentage is **73.9%**, while in 2008-2009 it is – **75.92%**.

Citizenship of identified trafficking victims

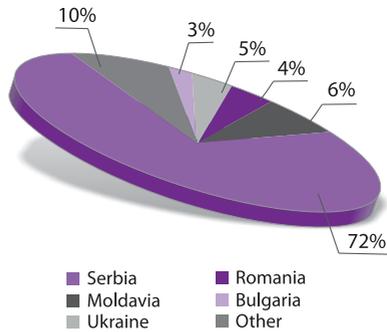


Chart 9

Foreign citizens identified as trafficking victims on the territory of Serbia in 2002-2009 were from Romania (4%), Bulgaria (3%), and to a lesser extent from Macedonia, Slovakia, Albania, Moldavia, and one each from Croatia and the Ukraine.

Citizenship of underage trafficking victims

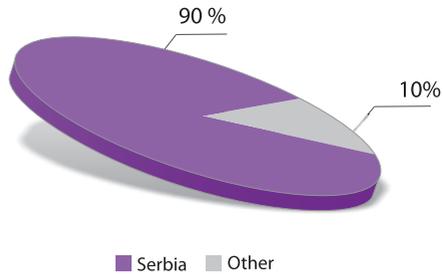


Chart 10

The children identified during this period were mostly citizens of Serbia (90%), while foreign citizen children were from Macedonia, Albania, Romania, Bulgaria, Moldavia and Iraq.

During the past eight years Serbia was the destination country for 50% of the victims identified by ASTRA. After Serbia, the most frequent destination country was Italy, followed by countries on the transit route towards Italy: Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro. Destination countries for a lesser number of over-18 victims were Germany, Kosovo and Metohija, while a small number of clients were being moved towards Malta, Greece and France. The final destination for eight vic-

tims was impossible to determine, since the trafficking chain was interrupted during transport, i.e. transit through Serbia, or prior to departure from Serbia in cases of our citizens, even though in certain cases exploitation present prior to this was not prevented, either in the mother country or other transit countries.

Destination of adult trafficking victims

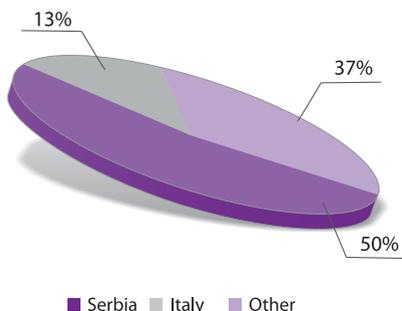


Chart 11

Serbia was the destination country for 50% of child trafficking victims during the same period. The other destination countries are very similar to the data for adult persons: Italy, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro, Kosovo, Germany, and for one child, France. In two cases, precise details on the final destination were impossible to determine.

Destination of underage trafficking victims

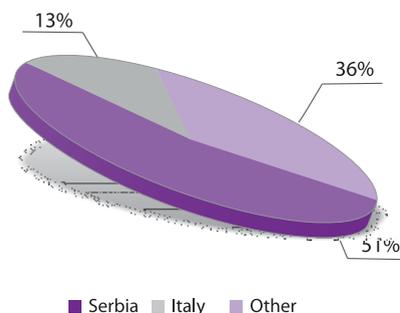


Chart 12

A large percentage of Serbian citizen victims exploited on the territory of our country was registered, i.e. the trafficking chain was not international in character. At an annual level, this phenomenon was even more striking in recent years: **2006 – 29.5%, 2007 - 36%, 2008 – 50%, 2009 - 42%** of trafficking victims did not cross our national border from the moment of recruitment until exiting the trafficking chain.

From the above data, it may be concluded that a large number of (potential) trafficking victims are being recruited in Serbia, representing more than two thirds of those we have data for. Serbia is also the country where they are to be exploited for nearly 50% of these persons.

The most frequent form of exploitation the victims were exposed to was sexual exploitation (69.9%), labour exploitation (10.14%), and forced begging (8.7%). Apart from this, three cases of concurrent sexual and labour exploitation were noted, three persons were forced into marriage and in one case trafficking was conducted for adoption.

If we track the types of exploitation that children identified as trafficking victims were exposed to in 2006-2009, in 74.2% of the cases it was sexual exploitation. Other types of exploitation that child victims were exposed to were: begging, forced marriage, parallel labour and sexual exploitation, as well as trafficking with the aim of illegal adoption.

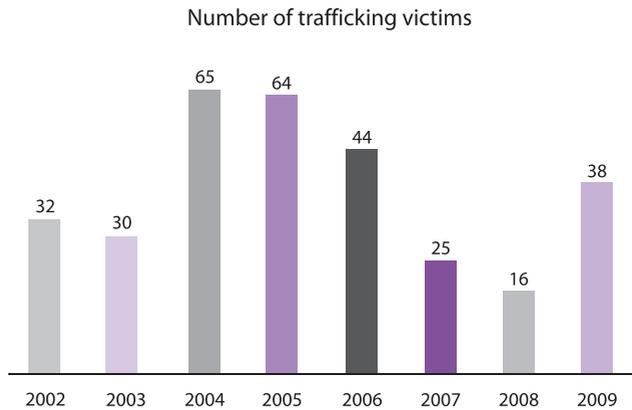


Chart 13

Assistance and support are provided for ASTRA clients through various types of assistances and interventions, mostly in the form of field actions. The forms of assistance available are psychological, legal, medical, technical and/or material.

*Legal Assistance*

Lawyers of the **ASTRA Legal Team** are engaged as representatives of clients in court proceedings led in cases of trafficking in human beings. Apart from representation, clients have consultation with the attorneys in the ASTRA Legal Team available with the aim of obtaining legal advice or information on legal issues. Likewise, support is

provided throughout the entire court process. The rules of working on the Hotline state that one consultant is to be constantly present during any activity related to providing assistance or support to clients, whereby any irregularity in the treatment of victims is further prevented. ASTRA monitored processes where our clients appeared as witnesses or claimants, as well as cases related to asserting the rights of our clients, but not directly related to trafficking. Likewise, a number of trials was monitored even though they were unrelated to our clients, due to the fact that the charges were based on Article 388 Trafficking in Human Beings of the Criminal Code of Serbia (up until 31 December, 2005 the crime of trafficking was incriminated in article 111b of the Criminal Law of the Republic of Serbia). On the other hand, our attorneys represented trafficking victims even in proceedings unrelated to trafficking.

Following the finalization of criminal proceedings, our clients are referred to institute a civil suit to exercise their property-legal rights. Two procedures were successfully brought to a close to this date. ASTRA provided these clients with attorneys and reimbursed the court expenses. For one of them, a citizen of Ukraine, we managed to obtain financial support for travelling expenses from the Ukrainian office of OSCE and provide accommodation, along with conditions guaranteeing her safety during her stay in Serbia. However, the problem of providing all preconditions for the arrival of foreign citizens and, especially, the question of their safety in these occasions are not simple to resolve, repeatedly indicating that there is a need to educate litigation judges, considering the current court practices of judges in the criminal proceedings not rendering decisions on property-legal claims of trafficking victims.

The court proceedings wherein our clients appear as the claimants last an extremely long time, having a manifold negative effect on trafficking victims and representing a form of revictimization. The proceedings often do not reach a conclusion for two or three years after being initiated, requiring frequent court appearances, repetition of statements and forensic analyses. The clients get extremely demoralized, especially having in mind that they are trying to move on from these events.

Apart from the slow pace of rendering judgments, a typical occurrence in cases of human trafficking is that the execution of legal decisions is postponed with no explanation. Two and a half years after the decision of the first-instance court in Belgrade a trafficker sentenced to four years and six months in prison is still at large. Consequently, among the clients provided with assistance during 2006-2009, several girls were identified as (potential) trafficking victims that found themselves in this situation through contact with said trafficker.

### *Psychological Assistance*

ASTRA clients are provided with psychological assistance through individual work with a psychologist or psychiatrist, group therapies and psychological testing.

Apart from professional psychological assistance, clients are provided support through individual conversations with Hotline consultants. Likewise, psychosocial support is provided in all phases of asserting their rights through institutional mechanisms (courts, social work center, etc.)

### *Medical Assistance*

Medical assistance provided for clients includes: general and specialist examinations, laboratory analyses, medicine therapy, as well as various medical interventions.

In several instances clients required the medical services of the **Institute for Forensic Medicine** and the **Clinic for Infectious Diseases of the Clinical Center in Belgrade**. Various examinations were performed as required for court proceedings, with the goal of documenting injuries sustained by exposure to violence in the trafficking chain, and the clients underwent medical tests for potential consequences of the abuse they experienced. Specialist doctors were contacted on these occasions and introduced to the problem of trafficking in human beings and sensitized for direct contact with victims, whereby, in providing medical assistance and during testing and treating our clients there were no situations with a traumatizing effect.

### *Technical and Material Assistance*

Technical assistance relates to the following forms of assistance: transfer during repatriation or visits to institutions, covering transportation expenses, accommodation at the shelters or locating alternative accommodation, etc. It was implemented by the **ASTRA Mobile Team**.

As a form of material assistance clients were most frequently provided with packages with basic items of food and/or hygienic products.

### *Field Work*

As part of the ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program, the ASTRA Mobile Team has been conducting field work as the basic method of making and maintaining direct contact with clients contacting us by phone or e-mail.

Clients were provided with assistance in contacting other organizations and institutions aiming to assert their right to specific types of assistance. Through field action, the ASTRA Mobile Team provides support for clients in making use of specific types of assistance offered as part of the ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program (medical, legal, psychological). Field actions mostly include activities performed in repatriating victims of trafficking, contact maintained with clients during the recovery process, and represent an unavoidable activity in monitoring clients, especially if they have no residence on the territory of Belgrade, and are not included in the reintegration system of the Daily Center regularly, but only through periodic visits.

### III ASTRA Hotline Database<sup>105</sup>

The goal of the database is storing and efficient and safe use of data, meaning that all data is protected from unintentional loss or damage in storage or processing.

All client and activity data is, with the assent of the trafficking victim, systematically collected and archived in a database. The database is a tool enabling the monitoring of the number of clients, their gender, age and citizenship makeup, types of calls, types of assistance provided, and other variables that make the Hotline activities measurable, along with data on traffickers and locations or places where exploitation occurred.

Considering the huge number of employment offers in print, on the Internet, and similar sources, an examination of the adverts is conducted, forming a separate database segment on employers and employment agencies. This data makes working with clients and forwarding relevant information considerably easier, both for clients, as well as the police and the judiciary, since practice has shown that data in apparently unrelated cases often correlates and that, observed from various perspectives and as a function of time, this information provides a clearer and more complete picture.

The database is constantly enriched with new input and is continuously developed to ease searching through the data, analyzing and processing it. Due to data security, the computer wherein this confidential data is stored is not networked with other computers in the office, has no Internet access, and database access is additionally protected by an access password and the limited number of people who know it.

### IV Trafficking Victim Reintegration Program

Since the first victims of trafficking were identified, as well as subsequently, in developing the ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program, we have recognized a need to establish a systematic and long-term program, transcending medical, psychological and legal assistance and support, placing emphasis on the reintegration of persons that lived through this type of trauma. Experience has shown that without work on strengthening the basic capacities of victims towards finding a long-term solution, they have no alternative and, after getting out of the situation wherein they were being exploited, they get drawn back into the trafficking chain.

The first step towards the reintegration of trafficking victims was made in 2005 by ASTRA taking part in implementing the one-year pilot project “**Training for the Economic Empowerment of Women Trafficking Victims**” led by the British *Women to Work* organization. Twelve girls attended the three-week training aimed at providing

<sup>105</sup> For details about records keeping and database, see Chapter 2. SOS Hotline for (potential) trafficking victims

employment capabilities, i.e. starting own businesses. The training was repeated in 2006, when the basic concept was additionally adjusted to the needs of the participants based on prior experience.

The institutional mechanism for resocialization does not exist, and at the level of non-government organizations only a limited capacity one-year program is available, implemented by the International Organization for Migration through the Temporary Home of the Atina NGO. The situation in our country does not currently leave room for precise measurements of the degree of successful integration, not even through general programs conducted to this end at social welfare institutions. Child trafficking victims are practically invisible in the reintegration process, even though in 2004-2005 they made up nearly 50% of the total number of identified victims. Resocialization of trafficking victims is one of the weakest points in the total activities of all anti-trafficking actors in Serbia. For this reason, ASTRA launched a Daily Center in January 2007, which built on the five year experience of ASTRA SOS Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program<sup>106</sup>.

## V Contact with Institutions

In order to meet the needs of our clients and provide assistance to human trafficking victims identified during 2002 – 2009, we have established contact and close cooperation with a number of institutions.

When forwarding search cases and/or direct knowledge of cases of trafficking in human beings to relevant authorities, we turn to the **Ministry of the Interior of the Republic of Serbia, the National Interpol Bureau – Belgrade, the Regional SECI Center for Fighting Cross-Border Crime**, as well as **municipal police departments**. The information is forwarded directly to the members of anti-trafficking teams or, if such teams are not established, to departments within secretariats which deal with human trafficking cases. Since corruption is a real problem, particularly with organized crime, the data on cases is forwarded to police staff educated on the human trafficking issue, who worked over the years on similar cases and have experience with specific issues of such cases. Further communication between these authorities and clients is most often conducted through ASTRA, wherefore one of the activities is to continuously stimulate a two-way flow of information, so that clients may learn of the results of the work of the police in specific cases. The police rarely provide feedback on the course or the results of investigation. With the exception of a few cases when we were informed by phone, ASTRA has received official information in writing on the results of a single investigation. This is but one consequence of the changes that occurred during 2004. The weakening or complete lack of the flow of data is but one

<sup>106</sup> See in the section 3.3. ASTRA Daily Center and mobile team for field actions

consequence, considering that the entire referral mechanism is degraded due to the reduction and selection in the exchange of all forms of information on the part of the police.

Cooperation with **social welfare centers** is necessary, in particular when it comes to children victims of human trafficking. When establishing contact with their staff, emphasis is put on the presentation of programs for providing assistance to children. By means of a timely exchange of information and unified assessment of the needs of our common clients, we have tried to make up for the shortage of funds at the disposal of centers, which is a reason why, in spite of a wide range of their competencies, their participation is limited when it comes to the provision of specific non-administrative aspects of assistance. In contact with representatives of social welfare centers in Serbia, with some exceptions, we have met readiness to establish quality cooperation for the ultimate good of the clients, considering that the aspects of assistance and programs implemented by ASTRA relating to the work with (potential) victims are not institutionalized.

In the course of 2006 and even more so in 2007, close cooperation was established with **institutions for children and youth without parental care** in Belgrade. In order to involve these children in ASTRA activities, having in mind that children without parental care are recognized as vulnerable in terms of human trafficking, the representatives of these institutions were thoroughly acquainted with the principles and methodology of the Daily Center, where they refer their beneficiaries whose affinities and needs would benefit from these programs. Keeping in mind the caution employees in institutions use in referring their beneficiaries to programs conducted outside of their institutional frameworks, their openness and efforts invested into the participation of children in the ASTRA Daily Center, as well as the quality of communication established, are certainly the strongest points in terms of cooperation with the representatives of institutions.

In order to provide comprehensive assistance to human trafficking victims, we cooperate with the **Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims**, established in 2004 under the patronage of the Organization for Security and Cooperation of Europe (OSCE) and operational within the Ministry of Labor and Social Policy since 2006. The main role of the Agency is to coordinate all those involved in working with human trafficking victims and to refer trafficking victims to organizations which are able to meet their needs by providing specific services. In this context, ASTRA has, in cooperation with the Agency, provided specific aspects of assistance on several occasions (legal, psychological, medical and/or accommodation) for persons not identified via the ASTRA SOS Hotline. The working concept of the Agency was developed in light of the idea that its representatives would identify human trafficking victims, yet in practice the police very often conduct the first conversation and take data from victims, followed by inviting the representatives of the Agency to conduct final iden-

tification and/or confirmation of previous police assessments. Furthermore, it should be kept in mind that the procedure envisages that two persons working in the Agency have the competency on the territory of Serbia to conduct interviews with each (potential) trafficking victim preliminarily identified in our country, which is difficult to achieve in practice. Experience indicates that, contrary to basic principles of working with traumatized persons and very close to violating human rights of trafficking victims, the assessment of the police, rather than the assessment of the representatives of the Agency, is often crucial in the identification process.

## VI Contact with Partner Organizations

Aiming to provide assistance to clients/teams, contact and/or cooperation has been established with numerous local, regional and international organizations in Serbia and abroad.

Over the previous years, this included strengthening and improving the quality of cooperation with organizations and institutional authorities from Belgrade and on the territory of Serbia who are members of the National Team for Combating Trafficking in Human Beings.

ASTRA is a member of the **Network of Trust**, which gather numerous institutions and non-government organizations from Belgrade and which facilitates active exchange of experiences and information if a number of stakeholders participates in providing assistance to persons who are victims of various forms of violence, including human trafficking. The cooperation within the network has significantly facilitated the referral of clients who are victims of family violence and/or other forms of abuse to organizations which may provide professional assistance.

Aiming to provide direct assistance or support when a client lives on a broader territory of Serbia, individual members of the **ASTRA Network** were contacted and this cooperation proved necessary and useful when monitoring the recovery of human trafficking victims living outside of Belgrade.

Furthermore, ASTRA was in contact with representatives of **Save the Children UK**, **CARE International NWB** and the **OSCE Mission to Serbia** which, since they work with individual cases, referred persons to ASTRA when they had knowledge of potential trafficking or in cases when preventive measures were to be taken.

**The Consular Office of the Republic of Serbia in Trieste and the Consular Office in Athens** were contacted on a number of occasions to acquire information necessary to our clients, and to provide direct assistance to human trafficking victims in several cases monitored by ASTRA.

However, it should be kept in mind that examples of the said cooperation refer to two consular offices, and that the number of destination countries of our citizens involved in the trafficking chain is much higher and that it is necessary to invest more efforts in establishing new contacts in the future.

Contact has been established with non-government organizations in **Italy** (CENTRO ANTIVIOLENZA GOAP, Stella Pollare), **Croatia** (ROSA, Partnership for Social Development Zagreb), **Spain** (Proyecto Esperanza), **Ukraine** (Chernivtsi Women's Center), **Bulgaria** (Animus Association - La Strada of Bulgaria), **Romania** (Reaching Out), Macedonia (Open gate - La Strada of Macedonia), **Bosnia and Herzegovina** (LARA - Bijeljina, Medica – Zenica), **the Netherlands** (La Strada International), **Germany** (KOBRA) and the **USA** (Safe Horizon, Project REACH - Mental Health Services for Trafficking Victims etc.). The aim was to make some specific forms of assistance accessible to our clients residing on the territory of these countries or attempting to travel out of these countries. The information and established contacts were extremely important in preventing difficulties relating to the departure of our clients abroad.

When it comes to persons who already resided on the territory of the abovementioned countries, the assistance provided by these organizations was the only accessible assistance at these moments. These contacts have facilitated several cases of repatriation of human trafficking victims. The quality and rapid flow of information established with organizations abroad is important to react timely in cases requiring joint efforts and mutual assistance.

## VII National Networks

### *ASTRA Network*

The national ASTRA Network was established in 2002 and gathers 11 organizations – members involved in combating trafficking in human beings. The members of the network today are:

- In Vojvodina: Center for Women's Rights of Vršac, Taboo of Zrenjanin and Cube of Novi Sad.
- In Central Serbia: ASTRA of Belgrade, Women in Action of Velika Plana, Association of Women and Mothers ANNA of Novi Pazar and the Center for Girls of Užice.
- In Southern Serbia: Human Rights Committee of Vranje, SOS for Women and Children Victims of Violence of Vlasotince, Center for Cultural Affirmation of Dimitrovgrad and Center for Girls of Niš.

In April 2006, ASTRA Network was decentralized and divided into three regional centers – Central Serbia, Southern Serbia and Vojvodina, and current coordinators of re-

gional centers are the Human Rights Committee - Vranje, Center for Women's Rights of Vršac and ASTRA (which also coordinates the entire network).

ASTRA Network meets periodically, several times in a year, when experiences are exchanged and agreements are reached on further cooperation. Meetings are also specific trainings aiming to strengthen the capacities of all member organizations, through evaluation of previous joint work, learning about specific assistance for victims, cooperation with institutions and media visibility. All representatives of ASTRA Network member organizations have the opportunity to learn more about the work of various organizations, institutions and individuals who face the issue of human trafficking in their work, methods to strengthen cooperation and practical opportunities to resolve the issue of impact on their local environments more effectively.

Some Network members have managed, with ASTRA's support, to launch and develop their own programs of education and prevention of the human trafficking issue.

### **The Network of Trust**

At the initiative of the Incest Trauma Center NGO from Belgrade, the Network of Trust was established in 2005 and gathers institutions and non-government organizations which deal with the problem of violence, in particular against women and children, and is the only such network in Serbia. The aim of the network is to work jointly on combating violence and reducing the consequences of violence, including trauma. Having in mind the processes that each victim suffers (from fighting for their bare life to the moment of exiting the environment of violence), the network members join their efforts to find mechanisms which would make the road as painless as possible. The meetings of the Network of Trust are held once a month in the facilities of the Incest Trauma Center.

### **Network against Gender-Based Violence**

The Network against Gender-Based Violence was established by the Autonomous Women's Center NGO in 2005. The Network gathers 25 hotlines and four shelters for women and children victims of violence and three research centers. The network members conduct coordinated joint actions, campaigns and research with a view to eliminating gender-based violence on the territory of Central Serbia and Vojvodina.

### **Y-PEER Network**

The Y-PEER Network has arisen out of the work of UN Inter Agency Group on Young People's Health Development and Protection, while UNFPA (United Nations Population Fund) launched this initiative in the region of Eastern Europe and Central Asia. The Y-PEER Network seeks to empower young people and ensure the quality of

youth programs through the standardization of peer education. All of this is achieved through designing of trainings and manuals, the accreditation of organizations and the certification of peer educators, the trainers of peer educators and the trainers of trainers. Today, the Y-PEER Network represents a large regional network with constantly growing membership. Y-PEER brings together young people, in particular peer educators, organizations and institutions (health and educational) who carry out peer education programs, preventive health programs intended for young people (regardless of whether they are already based on peer approach) or gather young people even if they do not have preventive health programs.

## VIII Regional Networks

### **ACTA**

ACTA (Anti Corruption Anti Trafficking Action), established in June 2004, is a regional non-government organization fighting for a society free from trafficking in human beings and corruption as extreme violations of human rights. The ACTA network gathers nine national non-government organizations in the region, with the aim of prevention, protection, assistance, monitoring and enforcement of law and activities of all stakeholders involved in fighting against trafficking in human beings and corruption. The vision of its founders was that ACTA would become a center of support and further promotion of democratic values and would take part in decision-making processes on the national, regional and international level, exerting impact on policy makers, authorities financing and implementing measures in the field of anti-corruption and trafficking in human beings. The ACTA network members are: Gender Alliance for Development Center from Albania, Lara from Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Bulgarian Gender Research Foundation from Bulgaria, Women's Room and Partnership for Social Development from Croatia, Safe Women's House from Montenegro, Reaching Out from Romania, Ključ Association from Slovenia and ASTRA from Serbia.

### **OMCT Network**

ASTRA is a member of the OMCT network – World Organization against Torture, the largest global coalition of non-government organizations fighting against arbitrary detention, torture, summary and extrajudicial executions, forced disappearances and other forms of violence. The coalition brings together almost 300 local, national and regional organizations aiming to eradicate torture and improve respect for human rights. In cooperation with local civil society organizations, the OMCT submits alternative reports within its torture prevention program to special mechanisms of the United Nations, supports individuals and organizations who strive to dispute the use of torture in international legal forums and publishes practical guidelines for the

utilization of international and regional conventional mechanisms relevant to the prevention of torture.

## **FLARE**

The FLARE (Freedom, Legality and Rights in Europe) program gathers associations and non-government organizations from Europe and the Mediterranean Basin working to promote the rule of law and social equity. The program is the result of cooperation of two Italian organizations – the Libera and Terra del Fuoco networks. The goal of the FLARE program is to create an international network which may take over the role of observer and report on the issue of transnational crime, through education, pressure on national and international institutions, publishing of articles, files, case studies and critical analyses relating to the issue of organized crime, the organization of campaigns, seminars and conferences and joint work of program members in international projects financed by international and European institutions.

## Annex 8

### Memorandum of Understanding

The Memorandum of Understanding (hereinafter: “**Memorandum**”) is signed by: **NGO ASTRA (Anti Trafficking Action)** (hereinafter: **ASTRA**)

and

**Agency for Coordination of Protection of Trafficking Victims** (hereinafter: **Agency**) (hereinafter referred to as the “**Signatories**”), having agreed on the following:

#### I Purpose

- 1.1 The goal of the Memorandum is to define a common cooperation framework for ASTRA and the Agency in identifying and rendering assistance for (potential) trafficking victims (hereinafter: **Victims**), whereby adequate treatment and full respect and realization of their rights and interests shall be achieved, with respect to the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organized Crime and its Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Human Beings, especially Women and Children, supplementing the Convention.
- 1.2 ASTRA identifies and establishes direct contact with (potential) **Victims** within ASTRA Hotline and Direct Victim Assistance Program. Various types of assistance are available as part of this program, aimed at preventive work, providing assistance, support and empowerment, through all stages of working with (potential) **Victims**, from seeking them out, to reintegration.
- 1.3 The Agency is notified of and familiar with the specific forms and means of providing the various types of assistance offered by ASTRA to (potential) **Victims**. (Annex A).
- 1.4 The main role of the Agency is to coordinate the process of organizing and providing assistance for trafficking victims, as well as informing **Victims** on possible types of assistance, both locally and abroad.
- 1.5 The practical experiences gained in joint activities undertaken by ASTRA and the Agency indicate a need to formalize cooperation in working with (potential) trafficking **Victims**, i.e. systematization in its key segments: identification and providing assistance. The Memorandum is a step towards the efficient rendering of professional assistance in all aspects wherein the cooperation to this date has shown potential for strengthening the assistance and support mechanisms.

## **II Principles**

### **2.1 Interests of the Victim**

- 2.1.1 During the process of identification and providing assistance for (potential) Victims, the best interests of the Victim shall be observed at all times. The will of the (potential) Victim shall be respected.
- 2.1.2 Aware of the trauma suffered by the (potential) Victim, the Signatories shall undertake all measures necessary to avoid secondary victimization of the Victim. To this end, the specific details of the stabilization period shall be taken into consideration, along with avoiding questioning/gathering information from (potential) Victims during this period.
- 2.1.3 Appearing and conducting conversations in police stations shall be avoided. Instead, the premises of the Agency shall be utilized, or the space wherein the (potential) Victim resides (Shelter for Trafficking Victims or other lodgings), as well as other alternative spaces suitable for the needs of the (potential) Victim if they contain the necessary conditions for gathering information.
- 2.1.4 The Signatories shall use due care, consideration and protection in dealing with cases of trafficking in children, i.e. persons under 18 years of age (hereinafter: Children), taking into consideration the welfare of the Child, as well as the rights and obligations of the parents, adopted parents, or other legal guardians of the Child. To this end, the Signatories shall respect the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography and the UNICEF Guidelines on the Protection of the Rights of Child Victims of Trafficking for Southeastern Europe (Annex C).

### **2.2 Confidentiality and Privacy**

- 2.2.1 The Signatories shall keep the identity, personal information or events related to the (potential) Victims top secret throughout the process of identification, providing assistance, or any court, administrative or other procedure or proceedings.
- 2.2.2 The obligation of protecting the confidentiality of information shall not cease with the Victim returning to their country of origin or their exiting the system for providing assistance.

## **III Responsibilities of the Signatories to the Memorandum**

### **3.1 Responsibilities of ASTRA**

- 3.1.1 ASTRA shall provide the Agency with the necessary information on the identified trafficking victims it is in contact with.

- 3.1.2 ASTRA shall make its capacities and resources, including human resources, knowledge, experience and skills, available should the Agency require them and if the request is justified and represents a contribution to combating trafficking in human beings.
- 3.1.3 ASTRA shall represent the interests and provide assistance to (potential) Victims identified and referred by the Agency based on an assessment of the capabilities of ASTRA in providing them with adequate assistance as part of its activities.
- 3.1.4 ASTRA shall actively stimulate cooperation in all aspects contributing to the development and implementation of programs relating to the identification and provision of direct assistance to (potential) Victims, if it is in accordance with the existing programs of ASTRA.
- 3.1.5 ASTRA shall make sure that any information it receives intended for the Victim being assisted in cooperation with the Agency, and relating to the Victim and/or that could be of importance for the Victim's position, be forwarded to the Victim (directly or indirectly) and the Agency without delay.
- 3.2. Responsibilities of the Agency
- 3.2.1 The Agency shall provide ASTRA with the necessary information on identified trafficking victims it is in contact with.
- 3.2.2 The Agency shall enable direct contact or referral to ASTRA for the (potential) Victims, with the aim of realizing a specific form of assistance, if an assessment shows that the identified Victim requires assistance that ASTRA is capable of providing in accordance with Annex A (types of assistance provided by ASTRA).
- 3.2.3 The Agency shall represent the interests of (potential) Victims referred by ASTRA based on the assessment of the Agency being able to provide adequate assistance based on its competencies.
- 3.2.4 The Agency shall provide transportation for (potential) Victims, including any situation where the (potential) Victims require transportation (medical examinations, partaking in court proceedings, etc.)
- 3.2.5 The Agency shall ensure that any information it receives intended for the (potential) Victim being assisted in cooperation with ASTRA, and relating to the Victim and/or that could be of importance to the Victim's position, be forwarded to the Victim (directly or indirectly) and ASTRA without delay;
- 3.2.6 The Agency shall make use of data on (potential) Victims, if obtained through or in cooperation with ASTRA, with prior notice to the (potential) Victim and ASTRA. Said data can be used in formulating a national strategy and interven-

tion, as well as in producing statistics to be used by all agencies, organizations and institutions involved with the problem of trafficking in human beings. The Agency is obliged to state the source of this data.

#### **IV Coming into Effect and Expiry of the Memorandum**

- 4.1 The Memorandum comes into effect immediately upon being signed by both Signatories.
- 4.2 Each of the Signatories can propose amendments to this Memorandum. Amendments to the Memorandum come into effect immediately upon being signed by both Signatories.
- 4.3 If one of the Memorandum Signatories is unable to realize activities envisaged by this Memorandum or if other circumstances occur preventing one of them to contribute to the cooperation envisaged by this document, thus seriously impeding the efficiency of the relations established by the Memorandum, and without finding an alternative solution, adequate measures may be taken, such as introducing additional amendments or the unilateral termination of cooperation by either of the Signatories.

#### **V Signatures**

NGO ASTRA

Agency for Coordination of Protection of  
Trafficking Victims

## Annex 9

## International anti-trafficking organizations and networks

Organisation	SOS Hotline	Contact	Address	E-mail adresa/web
ASTRA	+381 11 3347817 +381 11 3347817	+381 11 2635 114	Serbia	astrasos@sezampro.rs www.astra.org.rs www.astra.rs
Animus Association/ La Strada, Bulgaria	+359 2 9 817686 +359 80018676	+359 2 9835205 +359 2 9835405	85 Egzarh Yossif st 1000 P.O. Box 97, 1408 Sofia, Bulgaria	animus@animusassociation.org www.animusassociation.org
APRAMP, Spain	/	+ 34 91 420 17 08	Plaza del Ángel, 14 1º Izq., 28012- Madrid, Spain	direccion@apramp.org apramp2003@yahoo.es www.apramp.org
Angel Coalition, Russia	Calls from The Netherlands, Belgium, Germany and Switzerland 00-800-455-05-555 Calls from Russia 8-800-200-2400	+7 (495) 915-43-74 (fax)	Moscow, Russia	program@angecoalition.org www.angecoalition.org
Ban Ying, Germany	/	+49 (0) 30 440 63 73/74	Anklamer Strasse 38, 10115 Berlin, Germany	info@ban-ying.de www.ban-ying.de
BYWCA/ La Strada Belarus	+375 17 2953167	+375 17 2963745	P.O.Box 74, Minsk 220088 Belarus	lastrada@infonet.by www.lastrada.by
Center for Protection of Victims nad Prevention of Trafficking in Human Be- ings, Kosovo	/	+381 38 518 139	Pashko Vasa Nr.11a , Pristine 10000, Kosovo	www.pvptcenter.net
CoMensha/ La Strada, Netherlands	+31 33 4481186	+31 33 46 15029 +31 33 46 18064 (fax)	The Nether- lands, Johan van Olden- barneveltlaan 34-36 3818 HB Amersfort, the Netherlands	info@comensha.nl www.comensha.nl

Organisation	SOS Hotline	Contact	Address	E-mail adresa/web
Different and Equal, Albania	/	+355 (4) 254 532 +355 (4) 243 606	Rr. Bajram Curri, Pall. 31/1, Tirane, Albania	different&equal@icc-al.org www.differentandequal.org
Friends of Humanity, Switzerland	0800 20 80 20 (from Swiss)	/	Geneva, Switzerland	help@trafficked.ch www.trafficked.ch
GAATW, Thailand	/	+66 28 64 1427/8	191/41, 6th Floor, Sivalai Condominium, Soi 33 It-saraphap Road, Bangkok-Yai, Bangkok 10600, Thailand	gaatw@gaatw.org www.gaatw.org
Human Rights League, Slovakia	/	+421 (0)2 544 354 37 +421 (0)2 546 424 38	Hurbanovo námestie 5, 811 03 Bratislava, Slovakia	hrl@hrl.sk www.hrl.sk
Hotline for Migrant Workers, Israel	/	+972 3 560 2530 +972 3 560 5175	75 Nahalat Binyamin Street, Tel Aviv, 65154, Israel	info@hotline.org.il www.hotline.org.il
KEPAD, Greece	/	+30 210 9210977 +30 210 9246056 (fax)	KEPAD Naiadon 8 Athens 11634, Greece	projects@kepad.gr www.kepad.gr
KISA, Cyprus	/	+357 22 878181	P.O. Box 22113, 1517 Nicosia, Cyprus	kisa@cytanet.com.cy www.kisa.org.cy
KOK, Germany	/	+49 30 263 911 76 +49 30 263 911 86 (fax)	Kurfürstenstr. 33 10785 Berlin Germany	info@kok-buero.de www.kok-buero.de
Ključ, Slovenia	080 17 22 (toll free for calls from Slovenia)	+386 1 510 42 20	PO box 1646 1001 Ljubljana Slovenia	kljuc.center@siol.net www.drustvo-kljuc.si
La Strada BiH Bosnia and Herzegovina	+387 36 55 7190 +387 61 20 9603	+387 36 55 7191 +387 36 55 7192 (fax)	Bulevar Revolucije 35, 88 000 Mostar, BiH	lastrada@lastrada.ba www.lastrada.ba
La Strada International	/	+31 20 68 81414 +31 20 68 81013	The Netherlands, De Wittenstraat 25 1052 AK Amsterdam, The Netherlands	info@lastradainternational.org www.lastradainternational.org

Organisation	SOS Hotline	Contact	Address	E-mail adresa/web
La Strada Moldova, International Women Rights Protection and Promotion Centar "La Strada"	+373 22 23 3309	+373 22 23 4906/21 +373 22 23 4907 (fax)	P.O. Box 259, Chisinau, Moldova 2012	office@lastrada.md ismoldova@ls.moldline.net www.lastrada.md
La Strada Czech Republic	+420 22 27 17171	+420 22 27 21810	P.O. Box 305 111 21 Prague 1 Prague, Czech Republic	lastrada@strada.cz www.strada.cz
La Strada Ukraine, International Women's Rights Center, Ukraine	+380 44 20 53694 +380 44 20 53736	+380 44 20 53695	P.O. Box 26 03113 Kyiv, Ukraine	info@lastrada.org.ua www.lastrada.org.ua
La Strada Poland, La Strada Foundation Against Trafficking In Persons and Slavery, Poland	+48 22 6289999	+48 22 622 1985	P.O.Box 5 00- 956 Warsaw 10, Poland	strada@pol.pl www.strada.org.pl
Open Gate - La Strada, Macedonia	+389 22 777070	+389 22 700107 +389 22 700367 (fax)	P.O. Box 110, 1000 Skopje, Macedonia	lastrada@on.net.mk www.lastrada.org.mk
LEFÖ, Austria	/	+43 1 5811881 +43 1 5811882 (fax)	Kettenbrück- engasse 15/4, A-1050 Wien, Austria	office@lefoe.at www.lefoe.at
Living for Tomorrow, Estonia	+372 6 607302	+372 6 607302 +372 6 607471 (fax)	Kreutzwaldi tn.24, 10147 Tallinn, Estonia	www.lft.ee
MONIKA, Finland	/	+358 9 72 79 9999	Kinaporinkatu 2 E 40-42 00500 Helsinki, Finland	info@monikanaiset.fi www.monikanaiset.fi

Organisation	SOS Hotline	Contact	Address	E-mail adresa/web
Pag Asa, Belgium	/	+ 32(0) 25 11 64 64 + 32(0) 25 11 58 68 (fax)	Cellebroersstraat 16 1000 Brussel, Belgium	heidi.depauw@pag-asa.be www.pagasa.be
PETRA NGO Network, Croatia	0800 77 99 (for calls from Croatia)	/	/	www.petra-nvo.net
Reden International, Danmark	+45 70 202550	+45 33 914810	Colbjornsebsgade 12, 1662 Kopenhagen Copenhagen, Danmark	info@pag-asa.be http://redeninternational.dk
Safe Horizon Anti-Trafficking Program, USA	+1 866 604 5350	From USA: Tel: +1 718 943 8631 Fax: 1 718 943 8653 From overseas: Tel: +1 718 943 8631 Fax: +1 718 943 8653	50 Court Street, 8th Floor Brooklyn, NY 11201, USA	help@safehorizon.org www.safehorizon.org
Tanadgoma, Georgia	/	+995 32 352132	Georgia	counselor@tanadgoma.ge www.tanadgoma.ge
UMAR, Portugal	/	+ 351 218 873 005 + 351 218 884 086 (fax)	Rua de S. Lázaro, nº 111,1 1150-330 LISBOA, Portugal	umar.sede@sapo.pt www.umarfeminismos.org
Women's Safe House, Montenegro	/	+ 382 (0)20 232352 + 382 69 013321 (mob) + 382 (0)20 231153 (fax)	Ulica Slobode 74 81 000 Podgorica, Crna Gora	shelter@t-com.me www.szk.me

## ASTRA Network

Organisation	Address	Telephone	E-mail/web
Center for Women's Rights– Vršac	Mihajla Pupina 36, 26 300 Vršac	013/822 795 063/868 02 57	stoz@hemo.net
SOS Vranje – Human Rights Committee	Postanski fah 191, 17 500 Vranje	017/ 414 854 017/410 822	sosvr@hrcvr.org
Association of Women and Mothers “ANNA” – Novi Pazar	Ulica Oslobođenja 21, 36 300 Novi Pazar	020/312 402 063/833 4981	uzm.anna@gmail.com uzm_anna@europe.com
Women in Action – Velika Plana	Momira Gajića 38, 11320 Velika Plana	026/514 614	zeneakcija@yahoo.com epusvp@verat.net www.zeneuakciji.org.rs
SOS Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence – Vlasotince	Lole Ribara 2, 16 210 Vlasotince	016/874 744 063/853 63 04 016/877 490	sos.vlas@eunet.rs
Center for Cultural Affirmation – Dimitrovgrad	18 320, Dimitrovgrad	064/389 34 90	dsdimgrad@ptt.rs
TABOO – Zrenjanin	23 000 Zrenjanin	064/279 79 71	taboo.zr@sezampro.rs www.reaguj.co.rs/taboo/ taboo.htm
Center for Girls – Užice	Železnička 9, 31 000 Užice	031/515 290 031/517 510	girlscen@eunet.rs
Center for Girls – Niš	18 000 Niš	063/86 16 859	centric-nis@bankerinter.net
CUBE – Novi Sad	21 000 Novi Sad	061/18 32 193	officekocka@gmail.com www.kocka.org.rs

## SOS hotlines run by women's nongovernmental organizations in the Republic of Serbia

Organization		Telephone	E-mail / web address
1.	Autonomous Women's Center	011/26-45-328	tt@azc.org.rs www.womengo.org.rs
2.	Center for the Protection of Women and Children from Family Violence, Užice	031/521-441 065/831-30-64	soscentaruzice@ptt.rs www.soscentar.uzice.net
3.	SOS Hotline Society, Subotica	024/553-000	/
4.	Incest Trauma Center, Belgrade	011/386-1332	itcentar@eunet.rs www.incesttraumacentar.org.rs
5.	...Out of Circle – organization for the protection of rights and support to persons with disabilities in Serbia, Belgrade	011/3448-045	office@izkruga.org www.izkruga.org
6.	SOS Hotline for Roma Women Osvit	018/515-318	osvitnis@yahoo.com www.osvit.org
7.	SOS for Women and Children Victims of Violence, Vlasotince	016/877-490	sos.vlas@eunet.rs sos.vlasotince@gmail.com
8.	SOS for Women and Children Victims of Violence, Novi Sad	021/422-740 063/520-294	sos.telefon@gmail.com
9.	SOS for Women and Children Victims of Violence, Niš	018/242-075	/
10.	SOS Hotline, Vranje	017/410-822	sosvr@hrcvr.org
11.	SOS for Women and Children Victims of Violence, Belgrade	011/36-26-006	sostelefon@eunet.rs www.sos-telefon-beograd.org.rs
12.	SOS for women – victims of discrimination at work, Trade Union Independence	063/8081-490 063/8118-055	www.gszsz-nezavisnost.org
13.	Association Fenomena/SOS Kraljevo	036/235-706	fenomena06@gmail.com
14.	Women in Action, Hotline for Women and Children Victims of Violence, Velika Plana	026/514-614	sostelvp@verat.net epusvp@verat.net
15.	Women for Peace, Leskovac	016/237-300 016/237-301	zenemir@ptt.rs
16.	Women's Research Center for Education and Communication, Clinic for the Protection of Women's Rights Niš	018/500-237 063/826-27-51	clinic@prafak.ni.ac.rs

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[http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/sw\\_case\\_mgmt.asp](http://www.socialworkers.org/practice/standards/sw_case_mgmt.asp)

