



Transnational Report on Needs Assessment for Perpetrator Programmes



Funded by
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EUROPEAN NETWORK
OF MIGRANT WOMEN



Psytel
Laboratorio di Informazione



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Focus groups and interviews with migrant perpetrators or perpetrators with a family history of migration and with professionals working with perpetrators and mutual learning seminars with professionals from victim support services and perpetrator programmes

September 2022

France, Greece, Italy, Spain

This report provides a summary of the results of the Needs Assessment undertaken for WP2 by Psytel (France), UWAH (Greece), CAM (Italy), and Conexus (Spain).

Specifically, the four partners carried out:

- 1) Interviews and focus groups with migrant¹ perpetrators or perpetrators with a family history of migration²,
- 2) Interviews and focus groups with professionals working with perpetrators,
- 3) Mutual learning seminars with victim support services and perpetrator programme providers,

as described in the next paragraphs.

An external Advisory Board supervises and supports the project team: Professor Marianne Hester and Elli Scambor.

1. Interviews / focus groups with migrant perpetrators or perpetrators with a family history of migration

1.1. Brief description of the sample of focus group / interview participants

Across Italy, Spain and Greece a total of fifteen migrant men participating in a perpetrator programme were interviewed.

In Spain, five migrant men, between 30 and 53 years old, were individually interviewed on the Zoom platform. All of them had participated in a perpetrator programme for at least 5 months, up to 28 months. Four of them were from Latin American countries (Bolivia, Brazil, Venezuela, and Colombia) and one was from Morocco.

In Italy, five migrant men, between 25 and 51 years old, were interviewed face-to-face. Their participation in perpetrator programmes ranged from 4 to 11 months and their countries of origin were Albania, China, Poland and Romania.

In Greece, five migrant men or men with a family history of migration were interviewed face-to-face. They were between 29 and 55 years old and came from the following countries: Syria, Albania, Russia and Bulgaria. All of them participated in a perpetrator programme for at least 5 months and up to 18 months.

In France, it was not possible to interview migrant perpetrators directly due to COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, so three perpetrator service providers with over 10 years of experience working with perpetrators conducted the interview based on the guidelines and then reported

¹ "In the global context, a person who is outside the territory of the State of which they are nationals or citizens and who has resided in a foreign country for more than one year irrespective of the causes, voluntary or involuntary, and the means, regular or irregular, used to migrate" [derived by European Migration Network]

² A second-generation migrant is "A person who was born in and is residing in a country that at least one of their parents previously entered as a migrant" [derived by European Migration Network]

the collected information back to Psytel staff through 1-on-1 interviews. The providers have rapport and trust established and this is reflected in the richness of the data.

1.2. Entering the programme: help-seeking and being asked about violence

In the four countries, participation in the perpetrator programmes was mostly mandatory.

In Spain, for three men the participation in the perpetrator programmes was compulsory under court orders and for two it was voluntary (although one of the latter was referred to by child protection services).

In Italy, the participation of the interviewees in the perpetrator programmes was also mandatory and they were mostly referred to by lawyers but also by judges and as alternative penal measures.

In Greece, the interviewees attended the penal mediation programmes addressed to perpetrators under the mandatory order issued by the Criminal Court.

In France, migrant men participating in perpetrator programmes were mostly obligated to attend because of court orders, and just a small percentage attended voluntarily. Moreover, interviewees affirm that it would have been easier for them to talk with fellow countrymen.

Participants in Spain did not consider being a migrant man as an obstacle in seeking help but for the participant whose mother tongue was not Spanish, the process was more complicated. Similarly, men in Italy and Greece agreed in assuming the language barrier as the main obstacle.

Furthermore, in Greece, men experienced discrimination before being referred to the penal mediation programmes addressed to perpetrators. In Italy, instead, even if participants did not feel discriminated against because of their migration background, they declare that, without the referral, they would not ask for help.

“Yes, I would like my culture to be taken into consideration, I think it is important for all foreign men, not only for me. I arrived in Italy a long time ago, but I am still very attached to my culture and I like to tell it and discuss with other men about the differences.” – Male migrant from Italy

1.3. Recommendations for frontline professionals on addressing domestic violence and abuse (DVA) with migrant men

Interviewees in Spain and Greece stated that professionals should address men starting from getting to know the person and his migratory history, instead of asking questions straight about violence, in order to make them feel comfortable and not discriminated against. At the same time, as men in France, Greece and Italy affirmed, professionals should follow a non judgemental and respectful approach.

Beside this, perpetrators in Italy and Greece thought that receiving help by an interpreter with the language was important as well as being asked about the migration background. In Spain, while some men would prefer to answer questions about their country of origin, others thought that it would be uncomfortable.

Furthermore, interviewees from France pointed out the need to receive referrals to perpetrator programs from frontline professionals and for having access to contact details of experts that may help them.

Finally, perpetrators in Greece affirmed the need to address past and (possible) future experiences of discrimination.

“The first step is to put oneself in the place of migrants and their culture, to understand their logic and to understand what is and what is not violence for them, and from there begin the support.” – Male migrant from Spain

1.4. Care received in the perpetrator programme: culturally adequate approaches and experiences of discrimination

Interviewees in Spain, Italy, France and Greece affirmed that perpetrator programmes are not adapted to the migration background of the men attended.

Despite this, one participant in Spain stated that the perpetrator programme professional addressed his country of origin, the migratory grief and the administrative problems and other two men were given the opportunity to address racism and discrimination between participants during group sessions.

In Italy, two men had been asked by professionals about their culture and the migration process, both during the evaluation phase and group sessions.

Professionals from Greece had a culturally sensitive approach too, according to the interviewees, making the participants feel valuable and actively engaged in the process.

In fact, the interviewees in Spain, Greece and in Italy (except for one) agreed on the importance and the benefits of discussing their culture and the migration process and showed preferences towards that approach during the intervention programmes.

In France and Greece, men were supported in reflecting on their own representation of violence and the consequences for them. However, it does not necessarily include their cultural beliefs.

Working with professionals speaking their language and/or with a similar migration background was considered more appropriate by participants of Spanish perpetrator programmes. Participants of Italian programmes did not consider it necessary to work with foreign professionals but think it could be useful to receive language support. Also, interviewees in Greece addressed the lack of interpreters when men were not familiar with the language, acknowledging that this is an institutional gap.

Finally, in Italy, Spain and Greece, participants did not experience discrimination, except for some racist comments from participants in the Spanish perpetrator groups. Furthermore, French interviewees did report having experienced discrimination.

“Explaining how things are in my culture was like adding things in the programme, like I was offering useful information to the whole process, not only receiving help”. – Male migrant from Greece

2. Interviews / focus group with professionals working with perpetrators

2.1. Brief description of the sample of focus group / interview participants

In total, nineteen professionals working with perpetrators were interviewed.

In Spain, one individual interview and one focus group were conducted on the Zoom platform. The participants were six psychologists working in perpetrator programmes for at least 6 months and up to 15 years. Professionals were all women, between 24 and 39 years old.

In Italy, one online focus group was held with six professionals working in perpetrator programmes. They were all psychologists and psychotherapists, one interviewee was also a criminologist. Participants were between 30 and 70 years old, with a decade of experience working in prevention of gender-based violence, except for two people with less than 5 years of experience.

In France, three psychologists working with perpetrators were interviewed. In particular, they were two women and one man, between 35 and 50 years old.

In Greece, four psychologists working in perpetrator programmes were interviewed face-to-face. They were two women and two men, between 36 and 45 years old, with at least 1.5 years and up to 10 years of experience.

In Spain, all except one professional had been trained in interculturality or migration. In Italy, only professionals working in two of the programmes had received training on interculturality and in France, some professionals were trained in interculturality, too.

2.2. Basic information about the perpetrator programme/s

In Spain, professionals work in the *Contexto* and *Repara* programmes. The *Contexto* programme has been operating since 2006 and around 200 men per year take part in the programme, while the *Repara* programme started in 2019 with around 80 men taking part per year.

In both Spanish programmes, about 80% of men attended are court referred and the rest attended voluntarily.

In Italy, the interviewed professionals work in the *White Dove* centre, *Nuovo Maschile Association*, *CAM Sardegna*, *CAM Cremona*, *Elefante Bianco Association* and *Dorian Gray*.

The *White Dove* centre has been active since 2011 and follows around 130 men a year; *Nuovo Maschile Association* is operating since 2012 and attends around 20 men per year; *CAM Sardegna* started in 2014 and receives about 30 men per year; *CAM Cremona* attends about

20 men a year; *Elefante Bianco* Association and *Dorian Gray* have been introduced in 2018 and attend 30 and 80 men per year, respectively.

In Italy, around 90% of men who attended perpetrator programmes are court ordered or their participation is recommended by Criminal Justice Services.

In France, professionals work in a Centre for the Care of Perpetrators of Domestic Violence (*Centre de Prise en Charge des Auteurs de Violences Conjugales*), in which men can attend obligated or voluntarily; or men are in a socio-judicial centre, in which attendance is mandatory. In a legal case, attending a perpetrator programme can be an alternative to prosecution or can reduce part of the sentence. Men can also call a national helpline for perpetrators of domestic violence, active since April 2020, which is based on a voluntary approach, and private counsellors try to assist men in need.

Professionals in the Greek needs assessment work in *UWAH*, Community Centres and in a Counselling Centre. The perpetrator programme at *UWAH* is operating for at least one year and a half and attends around 25 men per year. Mostly everyone attending the programme is referred by a prosecutor's order as an alternative measure in criminal proceedings. In the *UWAH* perpetrator programme, around 20% of men have a migration background.

In the Spanish *Contexto* programme, around 40% of men are migrants, while in the *Repara* programme they are the 37%. More specifically, men come mainly from Latin American countries (Colombia, Ecuador and Bolivia), Eastern European countries (Romania) and Morocco. To a lesser extent, there are men from China, Pakistan and Syria.

In Italy, 30% of men attending perpetrator programmes are also migrants and they usually come from Eastern European countries, the Maghreb region, Latin American countries, China, etc.

The French specialised professionals were not able to give information about the percentage of migrant men that attend the programmes, as this information is not allowed to be asked in France based on French law of non-discrimination (Article 225-1 of the French Criminal Code and the Act of 27 May 2008). The specialised professionals report that they did not observe an over-representation of the population in the programmes. Participants can be migrants from all over, including being born in France with a family history of migration; in the last years, they mostly come from Eastern Europe countries.

“Many would like to be helped but do not know who to ask for help” – Professional from France

2.3. Referrals from migration related services

According to the interviewees, perpetrator programmes from Italy, Spain, France and Greece don't receive referrals from migration-related services and there is no coordination established between them.

Greek migration related services were even unaware of the existence of perpetrator programmes.

Despite this, in Spanish programmes, religious institutions or the Red Cross have referred migrant men on some occasions. At the same time, one Italian programme had a protocol with a cooperative which referred refugees, but it did not follow up after the Covid pandemic.

“It is essential to create a partnership network with all the actors involved in the care of this group. Training in identifying these situations is the basis.” - Professional from France

2.4. Approach to / care for migrant participants in the perpetrator programme and differences observed with other participants

In French, Italian, and Spanish perpetrator programmes there was not any different approach between migrant men and native men and the same intervention was offered to both groups. Only one of the programmes from Italy offered specific sessions about the migration process. Moreover, the programmes were not adapted to the particular situations that migrant men have to face, such as legal processes.

In Greece, professionals based the exploratory phase on men’s cultural background and tailored risk assessment tools to the specific needs of the migrant population.

In Spain, programmes reported they did not have any access to translation resources and in Italy only two associations collaborated with cultural mediators.

Generally speaking, professionals from all the countries agreed in recognizing some differences in the concept of gender-based violence that they observed in migrant men compared to other participants, except for professionals in Greece who did not observe any difference in the conceptualisation, discourse and degree of violence.

In Spain, some professionals observed differences according to the men’s country of origin: people from Latin American countries usually had suffered a lot of violence during their lives and as a consequence they tended to normalize it. Men from Morocco tended to deny violence and placed the problem in the values of Spanish society. On the other hand, people from Eastern European countries were seen to show greater rigidity, hierarchy, dominance and resistance to change.

Instead, the differences perceived in Italy were more related to linguistic and cultural aspects. Moreover, professionals found it harder to address migrant men’s emotional side and observed more defence mechanisms. Also, migrant men usually received harsher sentences and could not see their children for a longer time, compared to local men.

In addition, professionals from France pointed out that gender stereotypes, the concept of possession and administrative and financial violence were more present and that physical violence was more serious in migrant perpetrators. Moreover, they observed a lack of knowledge about French laws and gender equality as well as the fact that they were less likely to hide some behaviour by the lack of recognition of violence. Furthermore, there was an important influence of the family and the community, preserving certain “traditions” (for instance, forced marriage). They also reported that migrant men suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder and experienced significant violence during the migration process.

In Greece, professionals described that migrant men have experienced multiple traumas. They also observed that migrant men had stronger relationships than native men, although they were more likely to avoid separation or divorce because of a stronger sense of belonging and merged relationships. Migrant men were also seen to have a greater fear of the possible consequences due to limitations in language, socio-economic level, lack of support networks, etc.

“We do not have a specific work approach because the mechanisms of violence remain the same. This work is based on respecting who they are without judging their religion, their culture, their history... It is the violent act that is condemned, not their belief or culture.” - Professional from France

2.5. Interest in and needs for specific training

All professionals from France, Greece, Italy and Spain showed great interest in receiving specific training on intercultural aspects and considered it really important in order to work with migrant perpetrators.

In particular, Spanish, Greek and French professionals would like to introduce as topics the migration process and its consequences, post-traumatic stress and the impact of trauma.

Moreover, Spanish professionals were interested in the migration grief, Ulysses syndrome, internalised racism and culture shock, mental health, social integration, colonialist feminisms, and, more generally, the flexibility and adaptation of perpetrator programmes for migrant populations.

For professionals from France and Greece, the training should also contain inputs on different cultures and religions and introduce gender roles.

As professionals from Italy affirmed, the training may include both a theoretical and experiential part and be led by migrant trainers.

For the interviewees in Greece, training should be carried by people with a migrant or refugee background, also in collaboration with interpreters. In particular, they would like to have a focus on the function of the language. Moreover, professionals from Greece thought about the training as an educational experience and suggested monitoring the work of different European projects in order to be in touch with a broader framework in this field.

“Priority must be given to get to know the services dealing with the migrant/refugee population, informing them of the existence of perpetrator support programmes.” - Professional from Greece

3. Mutual learning seminars with professional working in victim support services and perpetrator programme providers

3.1. Brief description of the mutual learning seminars and their participants

In the four partner countries, a total of thirty-three professionals participated in different mutual learning seminars.

In Spain, seven professionals participated in the mutual learning seminar, which was held on the Zoom platform. Four of the participants were working in victim support services and three in perpetrator programmes, with a range of 1.5 years and 6 years of experience. The participants were four women and three men between 25 and 44 years old, with different professional backgrounds: four psychologists, two gender equality agents and one social worker.

The Italian team arranged two online mutual learning seminars, with a total of thirteen professionals with at least 4 years and up to 22 years of experience. Specifically, they were nine women working with victims of gender-based violence and four women working with perpetrators. Participants were between 27 and 55 years old and all psychologists; eight of them were also psychotherapists.

In France, the participants of the mutual learning seminar were four professionals: three working in victims support services and one with perpetrators.

In Greece, nine professionals working in victim support services and penal mediation programmes addressed to perpetrators participated in an online mutual learning seminar. They were all women between 37 and 55 years old and four of them were psychologists, four social workers and one a counsellor.

3.2. Specific risks and needs of migrant women victims / survivors and responses to them in victim support services

In general, professionals of victim support services in Italy, Spain, France and Greece agreed on identifying the majority of the risks in the vulnerability factors of being a migrant woman: no access to resources or services, job, documents, language skills, custody of their children, as well as isolation and marginalization, administrative violence, etc.

In Spain, victim support workers emphasised the risk of women reporting the perpetrator while they were in an illegal situation and in France, the fact that in some cases the perpetrator can have impunity because of his diplomatic status. At the same time, in Greece, professionals pointed out the problem of not having the recognition of international protection and a lack of shelters.

Specifically, professionals from Spain observed that the pattern and the naturalization of violence are articulated differently in migrant women. Most frequently, they were victims of more explicit and serious physical violence, as well as cyber violence.

Instead, professionals from France found more sexualized violence and prostitution in migrant survivors and the presence of the feeling that they owed everything to their partners. Providers working with migrant victims drew the attention to the risks of child abduction, repudiation and honour killings also.

Italian professionals attended more single migrant women than ones in a relationship. They also indicated that often migrant women find a justification for violence in the culture as well

as an encouragement in religious or superstitious beliefs; in France, professionals observed a discourse which is more linked to bad luck.

Participants in Greece stressed a lack of an adequate provision of interpreters as a primary gap and the importance of working with intercultural mediators in order to address cultural differences. Generally, gaps arose in terms of time, place, and gender availability.

All partner countries highlighted one specific risk of migrant women victims: the community and how it punishes, harasses and, mostly, isolates them. At the same time, the family-in-law or the family back home can also have a huge influence and/or cause harm to this population.

In Italy, women were even afraid that the cultural mediator would talk to the community. Similarly, in Greece they were afraid of talking to experts about the violence they were suffering because of honour crimes that often end in feuds.

French professionals recognised that a specific need of migrant women victims is to have more time to get out of the cycle of violence, to understand the system and their rights, to create a new network and to have access to interpreters.

Greek professionals added that legal and asylum procedure counselling, interventions related to employment (such as working groups or trainings) and social actions should be offered to migrant women.

“In shelters there is no coordination and it is very difficult to orient. How can it be possible that I don't know who the perpetrator is? There is a great lack of sense here and it is quite worrying.” –
Professional from Spain

3.3. Possible responses of perpetrator programmes to specific risks and needs of (ex) partners of migrant perpetrators

For professionals working in Spanish perpetrator programmes, possible responses to specific risks and needs of migrant women were using an experiential and relational approach, addressing home country beliefs and focusing on prevention.

Professionals from Italy suggested an exploration on how cultures affect the condemnation of violence and the role of the family of origin. They also thought that in addition to providing explanations about the law, the measures applied and the risks if they are violated, migrant men need an accompaniment for understanding.

Professionals from the French programmes reported that it is important to give information about the risks to which migrant men may be exposed. They also saw the need to refer men to psychotrauma treatment.

Participants in Spanish, French and Greek mutual learning seminars perceived a clear need to improve coordination between perpetrator and victim's services. Particularly, French professionals suggested the creation of common risk assessment tools and Greek participants proposed a common framework for understanding and intervention.

“Perpetrators are part of the equation, and to save the victims you have to work together. If you don't solve the problem on the perpetrator's side, you don't protect the victims.” – Professional from France

3.4. Coordination and collaboration between victim support services and perpetrator programmes regarding migrant service users: status quo and possible improvements

In all four partner countries there was a general lack of coordination between victim support services and perpetrator programmes.

In Spain, the problem showed particularly in shelters and, compared to other kinds of services, victim support services made less referrals to perpetrator programmes. Also, professionals in Greece underlined the same problem, due to the fact that many services were not aware of the existence of perpetrator programmes.

In order to improve the collaboration between services, professionals from Italy and Spain suggested having more team meetings. Italy also pointed out the need to make mutual referrals and a careful joint risk assessment. Spain and Greece recommended creating networks and protocols and incorporating multidisciplinary.

Moreover, interviewees from Greece suggested that the coordination between these services should be delegated to a third actor who would be in charge of its supervision, ensuring ethical standards and controlling confidential information.

“Migrant perpetrators can only be helped if we change the way we look at them, we must break down society's prejudices. The stigmatisation of migrant men, racism, is violent. It reinforces their anger and therefore their violence. It is the whole population that should be trained no matter where you come from.” – Professional from France

4. Main conclusions and recommendations

4.1. Conclusions and recommendations for the MOVE capacity building programme for perpetrator programmes

It is highly recommended to integrate an intercultural approach into perpetrator programme interventions and to take into account the different socio-cultural backgrounds of the participants, avoiding a colonialist positioning. At the same time, it is suggested to address the migration process and migration-related issues, being careful of avoiding men's re-traumatisation.

In fact, both interviewees in Spain and Italy pointed out that there is little specialisation on migration and intercultural processes in the field of gender-based violence and hence the need for more training. Professionals needed to be prepared and informed about the country of origin and its actual problems, the culture, the gender roles, the religion, the context and the norms around violence and introduce these topics in the group sessions.

Furthermore, in Italy, a specific focus on the position of the families of origin is proposed.

Moreover, interviewees in France suggested training on psychotrauma, forced marriages, dowries and transcultural aspects.

Finally, it is important to give men information about the legal situation, protocols and laws of each country.

4.2. Conclusions and recommendations for the MOVE training package for frontline professionals in the migration field

Frontline professionals need to receive training in order to detect gender-based violence and address the topic in migrant men, in particular learning how to approach them and how to talk about violence. Some interview techniques may be needed in order to improve their expertise and promote a confident space where people can openly talk.

Frontline professionals must be aware of avoiding judgement, erroneous representations and stereotypes and address people in an inclusive way. In addition, the intervention should be done from an intercultural and intersectional perspective and, in order to do so, the training should include aspects related to specific cultures.

In particular, the Greek needs assessment pointed out that different services and agencies dealing with migrant populations should request and receive specific budgets to cover the costs of interpreters and intercultural mediators.

4.3. Conclusions and recommendations for the MOVE multiagency model

It is important to improve the existing networks with perpetrator programmes and create collaboration and protocols with migration related services and other kinds of services (e.g. mental health, etc.) in order to increase the referral and the support, as well as networking with communities and neighbours that can participate in detection. Moreover, more coordination and joint team meetings should be encouraged.

Integrating a culturally sensitive and a multidisciplinary approach is also seen as fundamental.

Moreover, it is suggested to include coordination with ethno psychologists and cultural mediators, who should be trained in gender-based violence and be included in perpetrator programmes with migrant men. It is recommended that a clear distinction exists between the role of an interpreter and a cultural mediator, due to the fact that the first one may not have training about the cultural context. Finally, professionals should obtain training on the obstacles and challenges of collaboration related to men with migrant backgrounds who perpetrate gender-based violence and how to overcome them.