



Intellectual Output 1

European Comparative Report:

Mapping of existing practices

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Acknowledgements

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The information in this report is up-to-date as of 31 March 2020.

Introduction

This document presents findings of the research carried out by the partners inside [THE SIMPLE PROJECT](#). The research was composed of two parts: desk and field research, implemented in the initial phase of the project [from November 2019 until March 2020](#).

The research activities based on practices mapping about the [EXISTING POLICIES, USEFUL TOOLS AND APPROACHES](#) applied in the reception and integration process of migrants in Europe, [FOCUSING ON THE PSYCHOLOGICAL SUPPORT OF TRAUMAS AND MISTREATMENTS](#). The SIMPLE project addresses its activities to migrant women with a special focus on victims of trafficking in human beings, victims or witnesses of traumatic events.

Thanks to the research, the SIMPLE consortium identified [ALTERNATIVE NON-VERBAL TOOLS](#), helpful in the elaboration and expression of past distressing events, thereby considered complementary to the “joint approach” on the elaboration of trauma and restoring of someone’s socio-emotional wellbeing. In our research we put a special attention to the empowering practices understood as a process through which individuals can reconstruct their ability to choose, design and regain the perception of their own value, their potential and opportunities and to successfully root in the new community.

The extent of the research was limited to contribute to the purposes of the SIMPLE project and does not represent a full analysis on how the consortium countries deal with the issue. However, 81 practices and resources collected from countries of Europe and outside Europe, and more than 50 professionals consulted, offer therefore a meaningful overview about the addressed topic.

This Report is structured in three sections:

- Section 1 provides a brief overview on the non-verbal techniques while dealing with migratory trauma, providing the background of the SIMPLE project;
- Section 2 describes the adopted methodology and related tools for the desk research as well presents its findings;
- Section 3 describes the adopted methodology and related tools for the field research as well presents its findings;

Background

The SIMPLE project

All European countries are involved in a massive arrival of migrants, and many of them are asylum seekers, victims of trafficking in human beings. Several attempts have been made in the last few years to implement reception policies, by each Member State and at the European level. However, all policies were based on a more material approach rather than social, psychologicalrelated, focusing more on the legal condition of a person rather than on the social condition, which, indeed, is fundamental to devising good reception and integration policies.

The SIMPLE project has as its main objective the (re)conquest of the individual autonomy. Five Intellectual Outputs proposed by the partnership will lead to the development of an innovative Model of Approach based on visual narrative methodology, accompanied by the guide for operators (consisting of materials and tools) and learning pathways to the socio-economic integration of migrant women that aim to maximize the level of integration in the country where their migration route took them.

Definition of trauma applied in the project

For the better and coherent understanding of trauma for SIMPLE project needs, we are going to use a very broad definition of trauma. Trauma is a psychological, emotional response to an event or an experience that is deeply distressing or disturbing. A traumatic event is an incident that causes physical, emotional, spiritual, or psychological harm. The person experiencing the distressing event may feel threatened, anxious, or frightened as a result.

This trauma definition can refer to something upsetting, such as being involved in an accident, having an illness or injury, losing a loved one, going through a divorce or moved to another country. However, it can also encompass the far extreme and include experiences that are severely damaging, such as rape or torture.

Because events are viewed subjectively, this broad trauma definition is more of a guideline (agreed by the partnership for the SIMPLE project scopes). Everyone processes a traumatic event differently because we all face them through the lens of prior experiences in our lives.

Why non-verbal techniques?

The agents involved in the reception process reported that many of newcomers are not able to recognise the trauma when they arrive, additionally don't speak the language of the host country. Non-verbal techniques can arrive where the words can't and give many ways for non-verbal expression. The researchers agreed that for newcomers it is important to work with symbols, pictures in a way they can recognise and reproduce their trauma from a "dissociative" perspective.

Desk Research: practices collection

Objective: Give newcomers a face, create support, break through isolation, talent development, and contribute to trauma processing. To open eyes, to strengthen empathy and social cohesion, to make connections and to make people look at newcomers, at fellow humans in a different way.

Practices were collected by using the template (ANNEX 1). The final version of the template was discussed and agreed during the kick - off meeting in Sweden (November 2019).

The collection exercise took place in 6 partner countries: [SWEDEN](#), [ITALY](#), [UK](#), [THE NETHERLANDS](#), [SPAIN](#), [GERMANY](#) in the timeframe between December 2019 and March 2020. In total, during the desk research activity [81 PRACTICES](#) has been collected. Implementation of this activity involved the translation of the interview and the consent form into national languages (Spanish, Italian, German, Swedish and Dutch).

Thanks to the research, the SIMPLE consortium identified alternative non-verbal tools, helpful in the elaboration and expression of past distressing events. The research focused on [alternative therapies](#) with the knowledge that they can act as catalysts for self-discovery and healing, [which can help migrants to narrate their stories, describe past difficult events](#).

	N. of Practices	N. of Interviews
SPAIN	10	10
SWEDEN	10	10
GERMANY	11	10
THE NETHERLANDS	10	10
ITALY	28	11
UK	12	10
TOTAL:	81 (+21)	61 (+1)
PLANNED INDICATORS:	60	60

Filled practices tables were shared on the SIMPLE Google Drive, accessible by each member of the consortium under the following link:

https://drive.google.com/drive/u/0/folders/1xRXCvIE_kMFwemQz5TCGD417PZKhNkv

Please note: Therapies

Specific professional therapies applied to PTSD treatment has been mentioned in some of the national researches e.g. Cognitive-behavioural therapy, Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing, Accelerated Experiential Dynamic Psychotherapy, but as not of the exact subject of the SIMPLE research are not included in the report.

ALTERNATIVE APPROACHES AS CATALYSTS FOR SELF-DISCOVERY AND HEALING

THE POWER OF ART

The research findings conclude that live arts, particularly performance, is an art form that facilitates **AESTHETIC AND CATHARTIC EXPRESSION** while at the same time constitutes political action.¹

PROYECTA. VIDEO GALLERY

The idea to find a tool that helps people who have gone through an experience with traumatic consequences using art. Art scenes will provide a picture of “your pain”. These scenes can help building an emancipatory narrative that may alleviate suffering. Aim: link an emotion with an image and explain why.

STORIES OF MIGRANT WOMEN (“Gender, interculturality and coexistence” project)

Short film made by Fundación Mujeres with the collaboration of participants in women's associations in Asturias and funded by the Asturian Agency for Development Cooperation, which takes a tour of the different situations that migrant women experience, with poems.

¹ Research thesis: Towards recovery and bodily healing: violence based on action arts and creative arts:
<http://www.bdigital.unal.edu.co/6701/>



RELATOS DE MUJERES MIGRANTES

(<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rNjX96DUzOc>)

FILM WORKSHOP WITHOUT AUTHOR. CEAR REFUGEES – a project that offers a group of refugees the experience of living and collectively managing a movie based on their own selection of images and the construction of a collective story. Applied approaches: grounded theory, defined by Strauss & Corbin (2002, p. 14). Constructivism and social constructionism, reflective methodology and ABR (Arts Based Research), checking the importance of the construction of new narratives in processes of inclusion and social transformation. Action-research: the knowledge emerges from the action and reflection on action (practice) produces knowledge; such knowledge is potentially transformative. - As a research tool and as a method to transmit the collected data.

MOVING PEOPLE BY POWER OF ART HOUSE

Art project: 10.010 mini-refugees all over Amsterdam and The Hague. On park benches, at stations, at traffic lights, along the canals, in the zoo, in front of various ministries, in the train. Power of Art House wants to give these stories, these people, a human face. By telling their stories and opening eyes. Making connections and showing people a different way of looking at refugees. Encouraging empathy and strengthening social cohesion. Not to blame or shame or judge, but to show the human suffering in the stories of each and every refugee. Ten people were found to share their stories through various social media channels and refugee organizations. People who have ever had to flee themselves. They were then scanned in 3D. The themes, memories, events and feelings that emerged in their stories were visually translated in their pose. <https://www.power-of-art.nl/campaigns/moving-people/?lang=en>



ARTCONNECTS - EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

Migration Blanket project - women's stories across the world was presented during the Venice Biennale International Art Exhibition: ARTconnects - Empowering Communities, Venice, Italy. [THE ART EXHIBITION IS EXPLORING THE STRUGGLES, HOPES AND DREAMS OF MIGRANT WOMEN THROUGH ART. THIS PROJECT GIVES A WAY TO EXPRESS FEELINGS WHEN IT'S JUST TOO PAINFUL TO SPEAK ABOUT WHAT I'VE BEEN THROUGH.](#)

ARTconnects™ workshops are aimed at empowering communities with workshops held in Birmingham, London and Norwich in the UK, Greece, Paris, Dubai and at the Venice Biennale-2019. These unique workshops are led by Salma Zulfiqar and promote women empowerment, cultural connections and work towards preventing hate crimes and extremism.



PLATFORMA ARTS + REFUGEES NETWORK: <https://www.platforma.org.uk/routes-to-peace/>

Platforma arts and refugee network supports and develops arts by, about and with refugees and migrants. It brings together groups and artists / performers of any background or political status (e.g. refugees and non-refugees), whose work examines the varied experiences of refugees both before and after they arrived and settled in their host country. Supported by Art Council England.

COMMUNITY MURAL PROJECT – the Syrian refugee art initiative, which is an ongoing arts-based programming in Syrian refugee communities, led by Joel Artist, with Artolution and the International Rescue Committee (IRC). Creative activities for youth to **focus on, trauma relief and mentorship programs**. **There is a lack of arts and culture that enrich the human experience and no platform for refugee voices to reach out to the world to tell their own stories**. In host communities in Jordan, Syrian and Jordanian young people work on collaborative arts-based projects that **focus on reducing tensions and promoting social cohesion between these two populations**. <https://joelartista.com/syrian-refugees-the-zaatari-project-jordan/>²

IMAGES

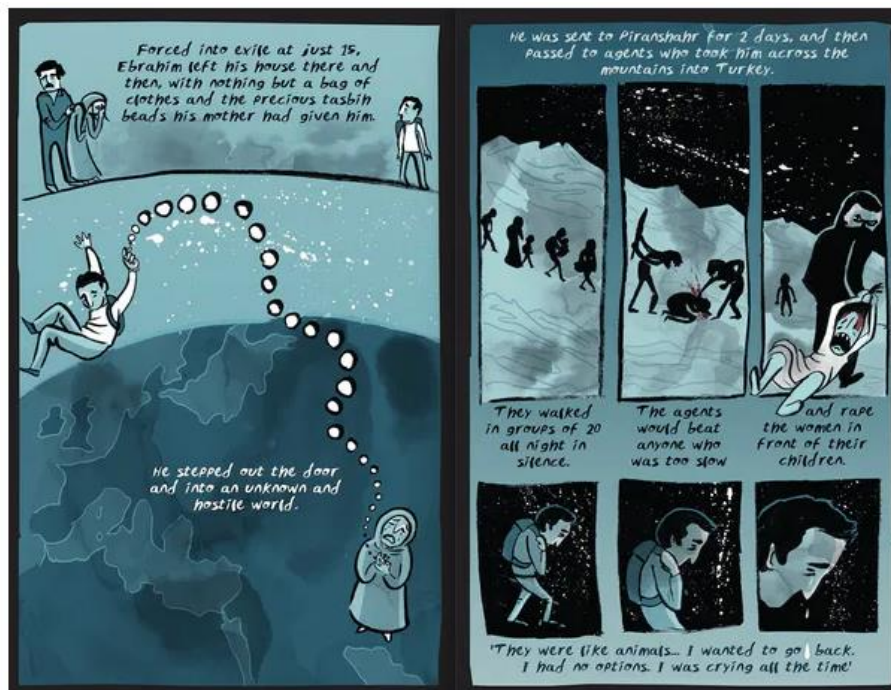
APPRODI APPROACH: EXTREME (STRESS) TRAUMA AND IMAGES. ARRIVALS: MIGRANTS' STORIES THROUGH THE USE OF IMAGES.

The Approdi (Italy) created **A NARRATIVE-TOOL, USING SHUAN TAN'S GRAPHIC NOVEL "THE ARRIVAL"**: the highly suggestive images are viewed, chosen and narrated by migrants. The aim of the project is to provide psychological support to migrants and to asylum seekers with multidisciplinary team (psychologists, anthropologists, linguistic and cultural mediators, educators). The methodology developed by Approdi based on three pillars: I reduction of symptoms and stabilization; II narration/elaboration (enable) through the image, the access to the memories and give narration to what before could not be narrated but only experienced in its terrible emotional, cognitive and somatic representation); III integration and rehabilitation of the individual personality, return to life. (restoring continuity to one's history).



² Thanks to the collaboration with the Artolution and their courtesy the SIMPLE project can use samples of their art for the dissemination of the projects (mainly on the project website).

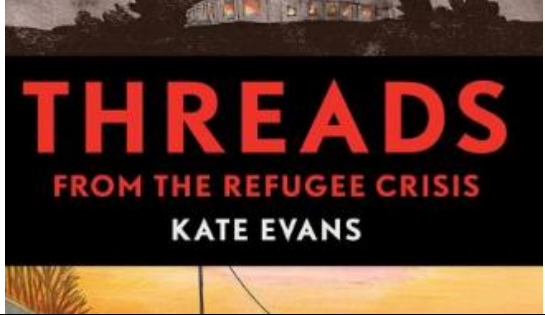


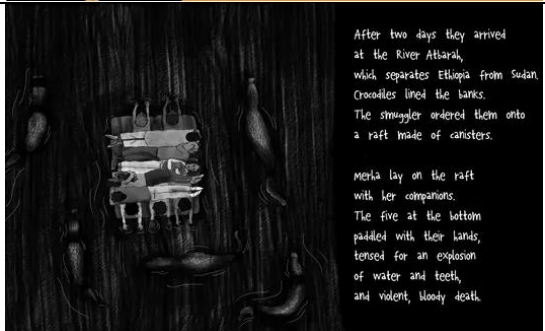

GRAPHIC NARRATIVES a valuable medium for exploring the long-term effects of being a refugee.



By documenting real journeys, representing traumatic memories and even translating complex research into sequential images, refugee comics have become [A POWERFUL TOOL FOR ILLUMINATING THE INDIVIDUAL LIVES AND SHARE REAL-LIFE EXPERIENCES OF MIGRATION](#). Comics often visualise scenes unavailable to press photographers. Simple techniques, such as thought bubbles, can be put to complex use, [ILLUSTRATING HOW A PERSONAL STORY IN THE PRESENT IS HAUNTED BY TRAUMATIC MEMORIES FROM THE PAST](#). Frame by frame, their sequential images reconstruct difficult experiences and harrowing journeys for readers to witness.

A list of graphic novels nominated by SIMPLE partners during the field research:

GRAPHIC NARRATIVES - personal stories illustrated in a powerful new way	
<p>"Welcome to the New World" by Jake Halpern and Michael Sloan</p>	

<p>“Threads From the Refugee Crisis” by Kate Evans</p>	
<p>“Over Under Sideways Down” by Karrie Fransman</p>	
<p>“Little Bee” by Chris Cleave (LITTLE BEE is published in the UK, Ireland and Australia as THE OTHER HAND). More: https://chriscleave.com/little-bee/read-the-first-chapter-of-the-other-hand-little-bee/</p>	
<p>“Fleeing into the Unknown” a short comic produced by the UK-based organisation PositiveNegatives</p>	
<p>“The arrival” by Shuan Tan</p>	

<p>“La Zattera” by Lucia Salemi</p>	
<p>“L’immigrazione spiegata ai bambini - Il viaggio di Amal” (Amal's journey) by Marco Rizzo e Lelio Bonaccorso</p>	
<p>“Fu'ad e Jamila - Fu'ad and Jamilia” by Cosetta Zanotti and Desideria Guicciardini</p>	
<p>“Leyla nel mezzo” by Sarah Garland</p>	
<p>Books on Boats, Library IBBY of Lampedusa *IBBY is the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY), which represents an international network of people from all over the world who are committed to bringing books and children together.</p>	

Read more: <https://theconversation.com/refugee-comics-personal-stories-of-forced-migration-illustrated-in-a-powerful-new-way-106832>

MULTIMEDIA EDUCATION RESOURCES OF POSITIVE&NEGATIVE – free tools for operators



“Maths of migration” – this is part of a series of cross curricular lessons looking at stories of migration. The series is freely available.

Video resources: <https://positivenegatives.org/about/education/maths-of-migration-educational-resources/>

NOTE: these issues may resonate with some learners, and some viewers may find the animation featured, ‘North Star Fading’ traumatic. Please watch it before showing to your class, and consider alerting learners of its nature before viewing.



THEATRE IN THE REHABILITATION PROCESS OF REFUGEES WHO SURVIVED TORTURE

The theatre performance contains the dimension of present, the dimensions of memory, temporality, probability and reciprocity; **theatre allows to explore the non-verbal ways of narration**, while the

entertainment dimension of the performance helps to **strengthen self-esteem and lay the foundations for a (new) sense of sociality**. The theatre foster the identification of an affective and useful social network on the territory, giving the possibility to cultivate a sense of belonging and to establish relationships based on trust and dialogue, as elements that affect the psychological condition and contribute to make the refugee an active interlocutor in the host society.

Theatre performance and all the preparatory exercises have the power to stimulate the interpretation and **can foster processes of elaboration of past experiences and traumas**, especially because allow them to be **expressed in a non-canonical way** (without words), using the body, space and interpersonal relationships.



All-Italian project which today is **THE FLAGSHIP OF THE EUROPEAN UNION IN THE RECEPTION AND TREATMENT OF PEOPLE WHO HAVE SUFFERED TORTURE** and their families. The experience of the theatre group in the rehabilitation process of refugees who survived torture. (IT: **Laboratori di riabilitazione psico-sociale del progetto Vi.To. del Cir** L'esperienza del gruppo teatrale nel percorso di riabilitazione dei rifugiati sopravvissuti a tortura).

C.I.R. (Italian Council for Refugees) applied in their work **OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY** (IT: ergoterapia) combined with **THEATRE PERFORMANCE**, which constitute an important path of integration and psycho-social rehabilitation, particularly in the initial phase of the stay in Italy of asylum seekers who have survived torture. The project is addressed to asylum seekers and refugees who have survived extreme traumas and is supported by a **MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM** that takes care of the person from a medical, psychological, social and legal point of view through **AN INTEGRATED APPROACH**.

Read more: Il teatro dei rifugiati. I quaderni del servizio sociale: <https://www.cittalia.it/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Sys-q-Il-teatro-dei-rifugiati.-Un-palcoscenico-per-l%E2%80%99accoglienza.pdf>

Shop and trial trilogy by Here to Support (Netherlands) projects initiated by a group of artists in a close cooperation with refugees in limbo from age 18 up. The aim is to shape partnerships based on equality within a society characterized by fundamental inequalities: "an open and inclusive society can only exists if everyone in it is acknowledged and entitled to rights". Here to Support does not primarily focus on providing

humanitarian assistance, **BUT IT STRIVES FOR EMANCIPATION OF UNDOCUMENTED MIGRANTS. TO MAKE THEM SEEN, HEARD AND ESSENTIALLY, TO PUT THEM IN CHARGE OF THEIR OWN LIVES AGAIN.** Here to Support runs educational and cultural projects that enable them to express and develop themselves. Trial Trilogy consists of a presentation that is between a theater performance and a conference. In both projects the refugees are guided/coached by professionals, such as designers, artists in the Co-Creative Agency and a theatre maker and human rights activist in Trial Trilogy. Hands-on and immediate and very little theoretical learning. (www.heretosupport.nl).

All life on one sheet - memories of asylum seekers (IT:Tutta la vita in un foglio - memorie di richiedenti asilo)

Remembering one's history has a very strong impact on one's own ability to perceive oneself, to understand one's identity, to redesign oneself.

Psychological supervision for the operators and mediators, to elaborate the weight of the stories they come into contact with is often necessary.

A Nigerian asylum seeker, referring to her own asylum journey, makes this comment: "Your whole life, you had to put it on a piece of paper. There was a black line along the edge of the paper, a border, and if you wrote beyond of that, your request was invalid. They gave you enough space just to write down the saddest things that had happened to you. This was the most terrible. Because if you can't read about the good things that happened in the someone's life, why should you worry about their sadness?"

MENTORING/BUDDIES



- SHOP Den (Netherlands) mainly work with women who have ended up in prostitution as a result of human trafficking. Operator: *I have traveled a lot and often I have been in the country where migrants come from. If migrants find you've been in their country, it helps to break the ice. I always look for something that is in common.* (<http://www.shop-den Haag.nl/>)
- CoMensha (Netherlands) has a coordinating role in accommodating and caring for victims of human trafficking, identifying bottlenecks and providing solutions for the fight against human trafficking. Comensha offers people who want to use their personal experiences professionally to become a **PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE EXPERT**. This includes victims of human trafficking. **WORKING WITH EXPERIENCE EXPERTS SEEMS TO BE A VALUABLE TOOL IN GAINING THE TRUST OF VICTIMS.** All powerful women having been trained in the Human Trafficking academy to assist new victims. Experience means that you use your experience to help someone else. (www.Comensha.nl)

- *Samen hier (Netherlands) “living room” festivals were organized in a number of Dutch cities where newcomers opened their homes to neighbors. [FINDING YOUR WAY IN A NEW PLACE: IT IS EASIER WITH OTHERS](#). Together Here refugees offer a social network based on this idea. For informative encounters and inspiring friendships. This accelerates the integration of newcomers. The matching is done through a special app that the Canadian research team designed after studying social networks. Together Here is also a pilot. They want to know whether the method from Canada can also be successful in the Netherlands. www.samenhier.nl
- A German organisation Koofra (<https://www.koofra.de/>) offers an individual psychosocial support/counselling from a cultural mediator (someone belonging to the same community as the client and in his/her native language. For security reasons the clients of Koofra e.V are not allowed to meet in groups. The clients and the cultural mediators meet in public spaces and work on their integration and well-being in the German society.
- Job "godfather" or "godmother": this project pairs the mother searching for a job with a volunteer with experience in the same sector. Goal-oriented individual assistance and support in the re-orientation in the labour market. Individual coaching sessions they assist in the search for individual strengths and skills and create an action plan in order to achieve the set goals (<https://www.diakonie-hamburg.de/de/visitenkarte/stadtteilmuetter-plus/berufseinstieg/index.html>).

Finding your way in a new place: it is easier with others. Together Here refugees offer a social network based on this idea. For informative encounters and inspiring friendships. This accelerates the integration of newcomers.

SPORT

- Sport and physical activity as resources for creating a “society of cultures”, Bologna, https://www.bolognacares.it/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/AeM_84_editoriale.pdf.
- Kicking Girls, Integration through Sport, <https://www.kicking-girls.info/>. Integration of girls in their school system and in society through participation in a team sport such as football together with other girls with a migration background as well as girls without said background. Main objectives: teaching to have fun through sports, reinforcing their self-esteem, teaching fair play, personality development.

Field Research

Field research aimed at providing in – depth data directly from the practitioners working with newcomers regarding actual practices, the existing gaps, how existing tools can be improved. Professionals gave insight into the use of non-verbal tools in expressing trauma and challenges.

All operators participating in the research supported us in the development of an innovative approach facilitating the narration of past difficult events and thereby benefitting women’s psychological and emotional wellbeing.

Implementation of this activity involved the identification of the organisations that would provide the most suitable information for the project. This interview was carried out around a few open - ended questions and took about 1 hour. All the information are treated confidentially and no personal data or information are disclosed or otherwise used except for research purposes.

In total, more than 50 interviews were carried out: Sweden 10, Italy 11, Spain 10, UK 10, the Netherlands 10.

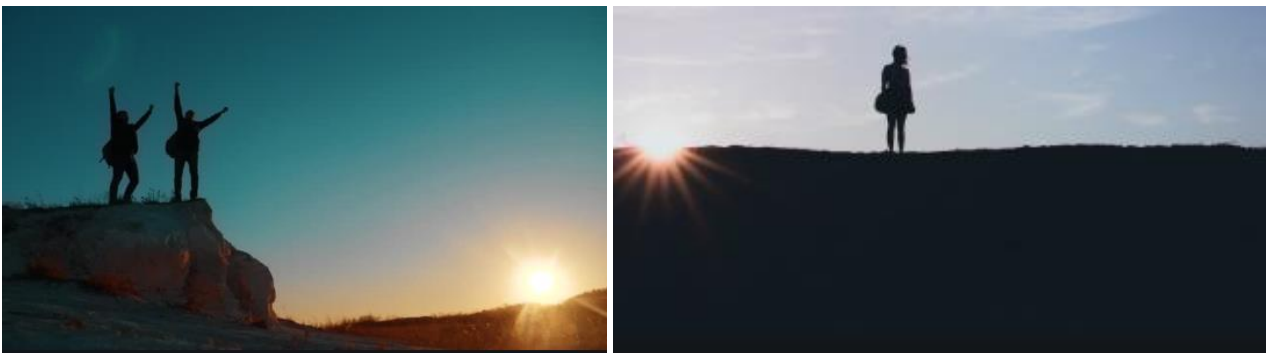
The number of encountered organisation contacted for the interview is much higher, estimated to 80.

Interviewee profile – who participated in the research?

Social workers involved in the reception process, immigration agents, researchers in the field, operators for asylum seekers and refugees, social assistants involved in guidance on the local territory, psychologists, intercultural mediators, and legal advisors, artists, creative thinkers.

Main findings

Regarding the **DIFFERENCES IN NEEDS** of the psychological support between men and women: All of the interviewees involved in the research in Spain reported about the differences in needs of the psychological support between men and women. **IN PARTICULAR, THEY REPORTED THE MIGRANT MEN AS SEEING THE TRIP AS AN ADVENTURE AND ARRIVING AS A VICTORY. WHILE FOR WOMEN IT WAS A HIGHLY TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE OF ABUSE**, particularly for those women that have passed Libya to arrive.



The agents involved in the reception of newcomers in Italy see the **DIFFERENCES IN NEEDS ROOTED IN ONE'S PERSONALITY, DIFFERENT CULTURAL BACKGROUND AND INDIVIDUAL CAPACITY TO FACE AND OVERCOME DISTRESS** than just characteristics connected with the gender. The resilience capacity leads each beneficiary to react to difficulties in an individual manner. This conclusion has been confirmed also by the research findings in Germany.

The operators that have tested different **METHODOLOGIES** reported that the results are much better if you implement **SEPARATED WORKSHOPS** as women do only speak and refer to their experiences using a lot of **EMPATHY** and **WORKING WITH OTHER WOMEN**. The agents reported that many of them are not able to recognise the trauma when they arrive. The researchers agreed and added that for women it is important to **WORK WITH SYMBOLS, PICTURES** in a way they can recognise and reproduce their trauma from a “dissociative” perspective.

It rather depends on the circumstances of a person's journey and personal history more than on their gender

According to the interviewee's feedback, almost **ALL NEWCOMERS FACE DISCOMFORT, DIFFICULTY OR EVEN INCAPACITY IN EXPRESSING AND DESCRIBING PAST EVENTS**. Migration is often a traumatic experience, in every phase of the migratory journey from pre - migration to resettlement. The majority of migrants face terrible trauma before, during, and after migration. This trauma can manifest itself in many ways such as aggression, insomnia, suicidal thoughts, and depression. However, migrants often can find the means to cope with their troubles focusing on family or practicing a religion.

CAUSES: We reported: forced migration, abuse (sexual, physical), fear of dying at sea, cultural shock, fear for one's existence, having had to abandon their families to earn a living in another country, domestic violence/gender violence, violence during the migration journey, negative relations with the police or the military, psychological violence, rape, human trafficking, forced prostitution, threats, voodoo, war, genital mutilation, asylum status issues.

FREQUENCY: The cases of the sensation of incapacity in expressing past events is reported as very frequent even to an 80% of newcomers. The organizations working with victims of human trafficking report a bigger percentage, even say that all of their beneficiaries suffer some kind of trauma, but not all of them show signs of PTSD. Moreover, it was stated that it also depends a lot on the age of the person and the country of origin and the situation there. People who come from a war country in Africa are usually more traumatized than the people from Morocco. Also the hardness of the trip makes a difference: more time on the trip - more things can happen.

MORE FREQUENT IN MEN OR WOMEN: All agents reported that this kind of discomfort is faced more often by women.

DO MEN AND WOMEN REACT, HANDLE THE SAME WAY AND DO THEY NEED PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT: The interviewees admitted that women demonstrate major need for a psychological support than men. They need to create/restore a "comfort zone" where to cope with traumas and insecurities. Emotions play an important role in this process. Women demonstrate a more frequent need to be reassured and to rediscover their skills, competences and opportunities in the new place – to be empowered.

A couple of the interviewees also noted that men might need a longer time to open up and share potential psychological problems. Moreover, some of the interviewees express that the influence of traditional representations of masculinity hinders many men from reaching out and getting the psychological support that they need. Due to the cultural patterns that require them to be useful, productive and to find concrete life solution, like work, as a way to ensure personal wellbeing. Findings from the German Report noted that more often than in women, men **SHOW SIGNS OF SOMATIC CONSEQUENCES OF TRAUMA**. They often report physical symptoms such as fatigue and pain which is most likely a display of a lack of mental wellbeing. This can therefore affect the type of support, which is provided to, and what is asked for, by the two genders.

The UK responders highlighted one more issue: the double disadvantage faced by some women (especially refugees), it has been found that refugee women are often single mothers and this is seen as an added pressure of supporting dependants as well as themselves. Women who have been subjected to abuse often do not feel like they can express their struggle, as they do not have as much of a place in society. Once they have migrated to another country, women are often not aware of the support is available to them. It was also reported that men are more 'active' so they seek out more activities, which can avoid social isolation.

CONSEQUENCES OF A LONG-LASTING DISTRESS

In order to understand why treatment is so crucial, it is necessary to first understand the specific ways that trauma manifests in women's lives.



MAIN COPING METHODS AND MECHANISMS USED BY MIGRANTS TO OVERCOME THE TRAUMA (without the intervention of an external agent):

- **Religion**: 50 - 75% of Somali and Ethiopian refugees used prayer to relieve their sadness. Religion is seen as a tool that helps migrants overcome a struggle and it puts the problems they face in a place out of their control.
- **Social network**: Family, friends and active social networks are often used, as a tool to protect the migrants from thoughts of past violent experiences and bring them something to look forward. Social networks are crucial to coping with traumatic experiences.

However, when personal coping strategies are not enough professional help is needed. Regarding the ability of newcomers to overcome difficulties, the interviewees are oriented towards the **NEED OF AN EXTERNAL, PROFESSIONAL HELP**. Even when a person apparently shows the capacity to overcome difficulties on their own, the perception of operators is that is just hiding it or "putting it aside" without really dealing with the problem (tend to avoid the issue, neglect the difficulty).

Among **AVAILABLE INSTRUMENTS, TOOLS USED BY PRACTITIONERS TO HELP MIGRANTS TO TACKLE THE DISTRESS** caused by the transition we can listed:

- Psychological support pathways;
- Group activities: mindfulness, psychomotricity for children, working groups on a range of topics and individual pathways;
- Educational activities: language courses, computer workshops;
- leisure activities and entertainment;
- Art laboratories. Art gives a way to express feelings when it is just too painful for to speak about the past events;
- Theatre performance. Theatre has the power to stimulate the interpretation and foster the processes of elaboration of past life experiences, especially because a non-canonical way of

expression: using the body, space and interpersonal relationships. Theatre give the opportunity to arrive when words don't;

- Volunteering;
- Counselling services.

Concerning the **APPROACH USED BY PRACTITIONERS**, the following elements are listed as crucial while working on restoring someone's emotional wellbeing:

- The work has to be **individually focused, flexible and adapted**. Example: a German organisation Koofra (<https://www.koofra.de/>) offers an individual psychosocial support/counselling from a cultural mediator (someone belonging to the same community as the client and in his/her native language. For security reasons the clients of Koofra e.V are not allowed to meet in groups. The clients and the cultural mediators meet in public spaces and work on their integration and well-being in the German society.
- Non-invasive interventions. Keywords: **LISTEN, RESPECT AND CARE**. The idea is to restore the feeling of being humans not objects.
- Each woman is a different person, with a personal life story and baggage of experiences so the methods need be to **adapt** to each person. Some are very resilient and others are not at all.
- You have to work in a very **sensitive and delicate way**, with time, you have to earn their trust and you need time for workshops to be effective. It is important to let them **feel at ease** and avoid direct questions.

REGARDING TOOLS TO OVERPASS THE DISTRESS CAUSED BY THE TRANSITION, the UK report highlighted that the support tends to be inconsistent and no clear tools exist as such. There is no collective approach to managing the psychological transition of the reception process for migrants and refugees. The system is fragmented. Agents reported a need for further tools to be developed.

REGARDING THE ACCESS TO PROFESSIONAL PSYCHOLOGICAL HELP, all interviewees reported that there is not much available at national and regional level and policies do not focus on the access to the professional psychological help. Most of the related work is done by volunteers in ONGs or project based.

Among the main providers of support (this list is coherent in all research countries) we can list:

- local organisations and support centres (3rd sector), charity organisations – main players!
- National Health Service.

Most of the interviewees expressed that people with traumatic experiences **NEED PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT** in order to overcome past traumatic events. However, some people might overcome the consequences of negative experiences on their own. This would depend on a person's resilience and their resources to deal with negative past experiences more than on their gender. Sometimes the need for professional assistance only comes up in the counselling session during discussion of other problems. The people who decide voluntarily to take part in projects of, for instance, labour market integration, already show signs of wanting to overcome their current situation and take control over their lives, which is already a good start in the path to overcoming potential difficult past situations.

Agents working with newcomers report **A GENERAL REJECTION OF POTENTIAL OFFERS FOR THERAPY** because of the stigma associated to needing therapy and psychological help in certain cultures. Many of the participants associate needing this kind of support with **BEING CRAZY**. Taking as an example the Sub-Saharan attitude, where mental health is linked to sorcery and the evil eye. Many migrants don't see mental health

professionals as a valuable resource, but a burden that is put in place to critique their lived experiences. Sub-Saharan migrants found four barriers they face in accessing mental health resources. These four hurdles are the stigmatization of mental illness, the lack of mental health literacy among the parents and youth, an unawareness of available mental health resources, and financial barriers.



(Picture: pexel, Elena Krima)

Very few migrants ever seek out professional mental help. For many, it is something that is too expensive or too far from their culture.

When asked **IF THE TOOLS ARE SUFFICIENT FOR EXISTING NEEDS**, according to the migration agents working at ONGs in Spain, the traditional instruments are very weak because they are homogeneous and in case of newcomers you have to adapt it to each person e.g. pre and post tests are not very useful: they are invasive and hierarchical. It is better to observe without being invasive. The other weakness of existing traditional tool is the duration: 1-3 sessions are useless. However, even if operators have very good tools including Interviews, case evaluation, referral to professionals or other entities, follow-up, conduct of psychological and emotional workshops, and even well-trained people what is **MISSING IS MORE STAFF AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES** to provide the support for all who need it.

Most interviewees express that the **AVAILABLE TOOLS AND MEASURES ARE NOT SUFFICIENT**. There is a need for **counsellors** with better formation and **better psychosocial skills**, who would be better **able to identify the psychological problems** of the beneficiaries and better understand their situation in life.

Which are the **MAIN ISSUES AND GAPS BETWEEN EXISTING NEEDS AND AVAILABLE INSTRUMENTS** to help restore WOMEN'S psychological and emotional wellbeing:

1. Not enough specialized projects on restoring psychological and emotional wellbeing;
2. Not enough psychologist and therapist who can work in other languages;
3. The lack of intercultural and multilingual skills by people in responsibility positions. Psychological support pathways with an intercultural and not psychiatric/western approach are needed (without judgments in front of practices that seem out of this world e.g.: voodoo rituals);
4. Limited access: the availability of psychological support in other languages also varies within different areas in, it is easier to find therapists in big cities than in rural areas;
5. Long waiting time, that might reach 6 months;
6. Resources should be adapted to international patients, not only language wise, but also adapted to other non-Eurocentric perspectives and realities;
7. Complicated bureaucracy, which makes the process slower, e.g. In Germany in order to have access to the therapy all beneficiaries need a permission form the social services. This permission is only provided after provision of a necessity test (Notwendigkeitsprüfung in German).
8. Bureaucracy requirements make the assistance often unfeasible (according to the Italian research outcomes, as it requires from the person to be able to explain the reasons of her distress in order to receive support, while sharing of her personal traumatic experience is often a challenging objective to achieve.
9. The asylum application process hampers the possibilities of stabilization (mainly due to housing in camps, the threat of being sent to another country because of a Dublin process, the lack of permit to work, the isolation, the lack of access to information);
10. Restricted access to medical care, for women without a residency permit it is impossible to access these therapies because of the lack of health insurance, lack of financial resources.
11. Lack of a 'joint' approach which should incorporate psychological support through mindfulness and meditation and a physical exercise support.

There is a need for counsellors with better formation and better psychosocial skills, who would be better able to identify the psychological problems of the beneficiaries and better understand their situation in life.

ALL the interviewees considered **VERY IMPORTANT TO OVERCOME THE SITUATION OF DISTRESSED CAUSED BY PAST EVENTS ON THE WAY TOWARD THE SUCCESSFUL INCLUSION IN THE NEW SOCIETY**.

The experts insisted on the importance of this psychological wellbeing from the very beginning of the integration process. One of the named examples is the difficulties that a trauma can entail for the language learning process at the arrival in in the country. Some experts declare **THAT INTEGRATION IS ONLY POSSIBLE WHEN A PERSON IS STABLE**.

It is very important to overcome the situation of distress to successfully integrate with the new community. Trauma is heavy luggage...

When asked about what would be the **MIGRANT WOMEN'S MOST PREFERABLE WAY TO EXPRESS AND DESCRIBE DIFFICULTIES**, the responses have included the following input (solutions, apart from psychological therapy):

- **NONVERBAL TECHNIQUES**. Methodologies that include symbolic language and aim to set general relationship with the migrant are very important. The experts underlined that it is important to rely on a very professional and targeted methodology, as we have to be careful what you unlock.
- **GROUP MENTORING: WOMEN SUPPORTING WOMEN** – it is very helpful to many women to see and hear that they are not alone in having suffered a traumatic experience. Working in this kind of groups is usually also helpful in building a social network and improving their self-esteem.
- **INTENSIVE INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT**, listening to their problems, because some of them have never experienced someone taking the time to listen to them;
- Techniques **BASED ON ART** are appreciated to facilitate expression. According to operators' experiences, projects based on entertainment activities addressed to women victims of trafficking and torture brought good results regarding elaboration of trauma.
- **THE VERBAL PART** is important but later. Traditional verbal techniques are perhaps among the most difficult to achieve. Women with traumatic experiences tend to remove or refuse painful memories (as a natural defence) and are not able to narrate and explain their suffering in words. In addition they face linguistic obstacles (don't know the language of the country of arrival and don't find intermediaries speaking their language).

Regarding the **WAY OF EXPRESSION**:

- either individually or in a group format, migrant women normally prefer talking about these emotional experiences in their native language and with other women;
- creation of safe spaces for women where they feel trust and welcomed is crucial and facilitates the expression;

Responders admitted that the use of alternative techniques, such as the use of images in order to narrate one's history, can be a very useful tool in the handling of potential difficult experiences in one's past, nevertheless this is no substitution for a professional therapy but an important component of a 'joint' approach.

References:

- Dealing with Migratory Trauma: Mental Health Stressors and Coping Mechanisms among SubSaharan Migrants in Rabat, Morocco:
https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3503&context=isp_collection
- Psychological first aid: Migrant trauma demands alternative therapies:
<https://www.reuters.com/article/us-health-migrants-trauma-insight/psychological-first-aid-migrant-trauma-demands-alternative-therapies-idUSKBN0TM0KM20151203>

ANNEXES:

Annex 1: Table. Practices collection template with explanation

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	REASON
Practice title	--	--

TITLE	DESCRIPTION	REASON
Provider name (institution)	--	--
Website (of the practice)	--	--
Reference person within the institution	--	--
Background	Brief overview of: institution and type of learners.	This is to identify the context on which the practice takes or has taken place.
Target group addressed	To whom the practice is addressed.	This is to identify the target of learners.
Intended outcome(s)	Objective(s) behind the practice.	Why this practice has been implemented? Are intended outcomes achieved?
Established practice	Description of practice as implemented, e.g.: service/course description; departments/units involved; staff involved; monitoring and evaluation processes; etc.	This is the description of the practice in relation with the context.
Format	Brief description of the formats used (e.g. workshops, seminar, offline/online, etc.)	This is to understand if any format is more effective than other.
Pedagogical approaches/methods	Brief description of the type of pedagogical approaches or methods applied	This is to understand if any pedagogical approach or method is more effective than other.
Addressed topics	Brief definition of the most important subjects (content) addressed by the practice.	This is to identify core subjects that are to be addressed by the SIMPLE model.
Conclusions and recommendations	A summary of how and why the practice outlined here has been effective	Lesson learnt
Additional information	Use this optional section to add any additional information you might find useful	

- collection of practices sweden
- collection of practices italy
- collection of practices germany
- collection of practices netherlands
- collection of practices spain

- collection of practices uk
- national report sweden
- national report italy
- national report germany
- national report netherlands
- national report spain
- national report uk
- io1 research guidelines
- io1 questionnaire research