

INTEGRA-TRAIN MANUAL

AN INTEGRATION MODULE

Enhancing the Integration of Women,
Beneficiaries of International Protection
by Development and Implementation
of Multifaceted Intergration



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In the midst of rising xenophobia, Melissa is a testament and a kind of prayer to the spirit of a country that has long welcomed refugees and migrants. “Migrant women experience double marginalization as women and migrants, but they’re agents of change (...). They’re integrators because of their children. They’re multipliers. For every tiny thing you give them, they multiply.”

- Women in the World, The New York Times

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INTRODUCTION

This manual is prepared by Melissa: Network of Migrant Women in Greece and ELIAMEP, the Hellenic Foundation for European & Foreign Policy as a part of the EC-funded INTEGRA-TRAIN project for refugee and migrant women. We believe in the necessity of a comprehensive approach with a focus on empowerment and active engagement. This manual reflects the work taking place daily at Melissa Network as an example of an integrative, community-based practice.

Melissa's philosophy and approach to integration is based on two premises:

- The idea that integration is a process of mutuality which cannot take place in spaces of exclusion. The module presented here reflects this practice: all activities are taking place within the Melissa premises, in the city centre, in close interaction with the migrant communities and the local population, in an inclusive and welcoming space.
- The idea that integration is a process, long-term, non-linear and holistic, and not a lesson to be taught to or imposed on migrants and refugees. Melissa's approach aims to support people in developing their life-strategies and contribute to social cohesion, in the context of a community of solidarity, learning and sharing. As such the needs and inquiries of members and participants, as well as their curiosity and their creativity co-shape the trainings and activities.

The aim is ultimately to develop a set of resources, or a toolkit, that can be of help in the process of planning a life-strategy and that can be useful wherever they live, within or outside Greece.

This manual reflects this approach and as such it is not a rigid guide to be implemented or a short-cut to the integration process but a reflection or an echo of the multi-faceted work revolving at Melissa Network.

The manual presents:

- The seven-strand integration model developed by Melissa Network.
- Practical guidelines with examples and activities for the trainings.

It is accompanied by a handbook with useful information and educational material which can be used by trainers as well as trainees during class or in one-to-one sessions to facilitate discussion, respond to questions and requests and offer guidelines for a variety of processes related to the integration of women migrants and refugees.

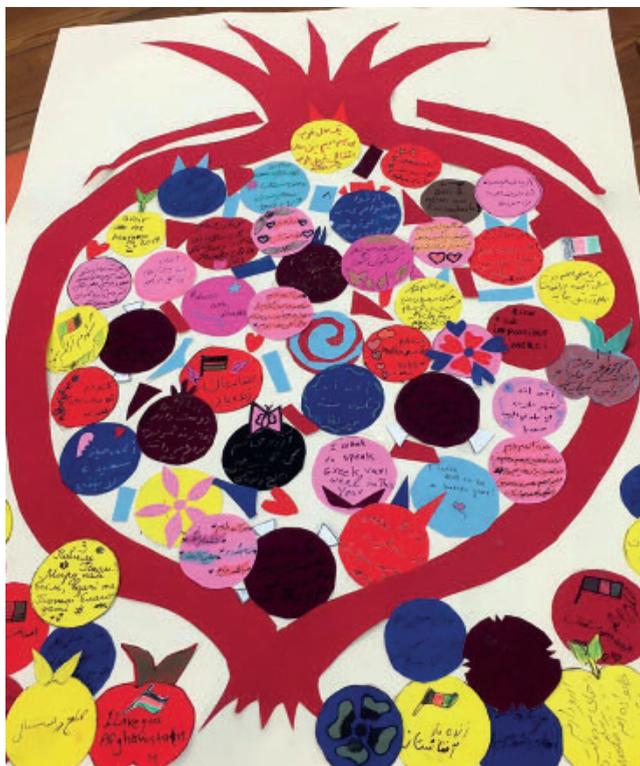
This manual has three interlocked aims:

- To present the distinct and comprehensive approach to integration practiced by Melissa Network and to share good practices.
- To present practical tools and ideas in order to facilitate others who share our com-

mitments, together with education material and useful information to support interaction in class or to use in sessions requiring an one-to-one approach due to their confidential and sensitive nature. This material covers areas which in our experience are of interest to women migrants and refugees, or arise as a need in a variety of interactions between the trainees and the trainers.

- To promote migrant and refugee women's agency and to integrate their own voices and opinions in the policies that concern them.

The manual is a flexible, adaptable tool, with a logic of transferability, offering appropriate resources to cover specific requests and needs, within and beyond the Greek context.



SUMMARY OF INTEGRA-TRAIN:

Enhancing the Integration of Women, Beneficiaries of International Protection by Development and Implementation of Multifaceted Integration Trainings.

In the context of increasing refugee inflows in the European continent it becomes highly relevant to propose and implement practical actions responding to existing gaps in migrant/ refugee integration across the EU member states. This project aims to implement actions in five EU member states (Bulgaria, Greece, Spain, Malta and Italy) to foster the integration of migrants (in particular beneficiaries of international protection and women among them) by design and conduct of comprehensive integration trainings. Project Duration: 29 months (01.01.2017-30.04.2019)

The key aims of the project include:

- 1) To exchange knowledge and experience at cross-national EU level in the sphere of integration training for migrants from member states with longer experience in refugee integration (ES and IT) to countries with weaker and less developed integration structures (BG, EL and MT);
- 2) To increase preparedness and familiarity of refugees (including refugee women and girls) with the civic, legal, social and cultural realities of their host milieus, as important start up and facilitation tool of the longer-term process of integration;
- 3) To build the capacity of national NGO and GO stakeholders to offer integration courses to migrants (including women).

The key project actions include:

- Exchange of knowledge: conduct of 5 scoping studies and reports on institutional mechanisms and training needs of migrant women; 2 study visits to integration institutions in ES and IT.
- Exchange and development of experience: collection of integration modules from ES and IT; international train the trainers seminar in integration courses development and conduct; development of national integration modules for migrants and national train the trainers seminars in BG, EL and MT.
- Integration training: conduct of integration trainings for refugees in BG, EL and MT; mid-term evaluation training seminars in BG, EL and MT; development of integration information materials for migrants/ refugees; monitoring of integration trainings in BG, EL and MT and drafting of monitoring reports for optimization of integration training. Dissemination and ownership transfer: publication and dissemination of integration modules and information materials and conduct of national dissemination conferences in BG, EL and MT.

WHO WE ARE

ENGLISH VERSION HELLENIC FOUNDATION FOR EUROPEAN AND FOREIGN POLICY (ELIAMEP)

The Hellenic Foundation for European and Foreign Policy (ELIAMEP) is a private, independent, nonprofit-making think tank, established in Athens, Greece, in 1988. Its mission is to conduct policy-oriented research and provide policy makers, academics and the public at large with authoritative information and substantiated policy recommendations, so as to contribute to the development of evidence-based responses to major European and foreign policy challenges.

ELIAMEP is committed to excellence; be it in open dialogue and policy deliberation, research, training and any other undertaking that falls under its mandate. International rankings of think-tanks put ELIAMEP at the top of the list among its counterparts in South Eastern Europe and in a very good position among European think-tanks. In December 2017, the Foundation was the recipient of an Athens Academy award for its long-time contribution to public dialogue and policy planning in its fields of expertise.

ELIAMEP's expertise spans over a wide range of geographic and functional areas: EU institutions and policies; migration management, security, international relations and conflict resolution (with a special focus on the Balkans, the Black Sea, the former Soviet space, the Mediterranean/Middle East and Asia); transatlantic relations; democracy, human rights and civic participation; good governance and the rule of law; religion and culture; the role of the media in the era of fake news; energy and climate change.

MELISSA: NETWORK OF MIGRANT WOMEN IN GREECE

Melissa is a network for migrant and refugee women living in Greece. It aims to promote empowerment and active citizenship, to create and sustain bonds, and to build a bridge of communication with the host society. Founded in September 2014 with the direct involvement of migrant women leaders, it has members from 45 countries who live and work in Greece. It operates on the basis of a common platform, a hub where networks and individuals can meet, share their concerns and ideas, and support each other in the pursuit of their common goals.

‘MELISSA’ MEANS:

The name ‘Melissa’ stems from the Greek word for honey-bee. It stands for the women who have come here from all over the world, bringing along skills and talents, dreams and ideas, unique stories and extraordinary strengths. They are agents of change for their own lives, their families, their societies, as well as for the society that hosts them.

VISION:

Melissa’s vision of society is not as a collection of isolated cells, but as a beehive of creativity, communication and exchange. Our aim is to motivate migrant and refugee women and engage them in the public sphere, in order to be the change they wish to see. Despite the adversities that they have faced and continue to face in the current crisis, migrant and refugee women are multipliers and integrators. They are capable of making something out of almost nothing, multiplying their scarce resources in order to feed, nurture and care. What they create with their work, their dedication, their talents, their efforts and ambitions, promotes social cohesion and contributes to the host society in countless visible and invisible ways.

MISSION:

Melissa’s mission is to contribute to the empowerment of migrant and refugee woman, making their voices heard and supporting them in becoming agents of change. We do this by providing a safe space of sharing and learning, where they can access support, information and opportunities, pursue their own initiatives and build their life strategies.

MELISSA NETWORK AIMS TO:

- Support migrant and refugee women's rights.
- Promote migrant and refugee women's empowerment and make their voices heard.
- Facilitate networking among groups of diverse ethnic origins, creating an effective structure to enable their networking capacity and their inclusive attitudes promoting tolerance, mutual understanding and solidarity.
- Create a bridge of communication with the host society.
- Introduce new actors into the social sphere, drawing upon their grassroots experience, and encouraging participation and active citizenship.
- Create a space where migrant and refugee women can express their own aspirations and concerns.
- Support and encourage their initiatives.
- Empower migrant and refugee women to find the means to support themselves.
- Record and encourage their 'informal strategies' as practiced, in a process of creating rights from below.
- Address the issues confronted by crisis-ridden Greece in creative ways, informed by the women's own, diverse experiences.
- Widen the advocacy pool and the participation in the public sphere by developing media and communication skills.
- Raise awareness.
- Promote positive role-models.



ALEF: AN INTEGRATION PATHWAY FOR REFUGEE WOMEN AND GIRLS

Alef is a community-based integration pathway for refugee women and girls, initiated immediately after the closing of the borders in 2016. The title comes from a word that is common in many languages, including Arabic, Farsi and Dari, which is the root of the Alpha of the alphabet. It stands for what connects us all, and at the same time, for the first steps in the new life. Alef is designed as a comprehensive model, based on a holistic approach to the notion of integration as a process that leads to the empowerment of the refugee women and their access to the host society in a variety of ways that allow them to contribute to social cohesion. It is primarily based on the experience and ongoing involvement of migrant women leaders with a background in community organizing.

This approach is based on a layered-learning education model, appropriate in post-trauma contexts where mainstream education models fail, leading to high dropout rates independently of the resources invested, in a way that addresses the multifaceted needs of women on the move. However, it goes beyond the typical needs-assessments and opens a space for the expression of the will, the hopes and the wishes of those involved. Furthermore, it aims to empower and actively engage them in planning sustainable life strategies.

Between 2016-2019, 1120 refugee women, girls and children have participated in Melissa Network's integration and empowerment programs (serving 130 on average per day) offering more than 1,000 activities per year.



A COMMUNITY-BASED INTEGRATION MODEL

A) THE SEVEN STRANDS OF ACTIVITIES

The Melissa Network focuses on seven strands of activities to fulfill community-building goals for integration for women and girls:

- Literacy
- Psycho-social support
- Art and Creativity
- Information and Referrals
- Skills & Capacity building
- Media & Advocacy
- Self-care & Community engagement

All classes are linguistically mixed, so that the participants are exposed to the notion of cultural coexistence throughout the learning process.

The overall program is further supported by:

- access to translators
- parallel childcare
- referral pathway

Throughout the program, the participants are engaged in feedback sessions, while at the same time, they are encouraged to develop their own initiatives contributing to community building and social change.



1. LITERACY

The literacy support program has been designed and is monitored by linguists and leading education experts, in partnership with migrant women community leaders, in order to create an interactive teaching tool addressing the needs of a newcomer in Greece and facilitate communication. It operates at various levels by now, from transition and introductory classes to advanced Greek and homework support.

Literacy activities include:

- Greek
- English
- Other languages (i.e. German, French etc)
- Homework support
- Transition from illiteracy
- Mother tongue activities

Methodology: A Hands-On Approach

Field trips are included as hands-on activities promoting literacy and civic education. Going around the city with their teacher enables participants to use their linguistic and communication skills while learning about their neighborhood or about the city they live in. These trips can take different forms, such as sitting in a cafe, a visit to a museum, a university, a cultural center, a restaurant selected by the group themselves with the following goals to achieve through these activities in addition to intensive language classes:

- To walk away from the class for a more tangible experience in Greek society (asking address, mapping neighborhoods in Athens, shopping and asking prices at various settings such as open market, supermarket, coffee shops, grocery shops etc).
- To visit another side of the city through public transportation (including buying tickets, asking for schedule etc).
- To immerse into Greek culture by visiting a cultural center and use their linguistic skills.
- To exchange ideas, information, cultural practices with other people in Greek (cultural artifacts such as songs, poems or food).
- To build strong relationship between classmates and teachers (introduction of self and family, discussing daily news from Greece and the world every day).

1.1 GREEK LANGUAGE COURSES

Duration: Daily for 3-4 teaching hours a day per participant

Class size: 15-20 participants

Objectives:

- To build trust between teachers and participants, among participants and among Melissa community
- To gain a basic knowledge of Greek
- To be open to get to know different cultures and countries
- To exchange ideas on different countries and cultures
- To obtain basic communication skills through an interactive and practically oriented module
- To gain an understanding of Greek society and culture
- To have support for their formal education in Greece
- To understand daily news for Greece, for their countries of origins
- To help our participants who go to regular school in Athens with their homework

Description of the activity:

Greek language classes introduce participants to the usage of Greek through everyday life situations. The module is structured by highly specialized linguists through focus groups with migrant women leaders at Melissa, in order to identify the areas of interest. It is an interactive toolkit, providing people with basic linguistic skills. Classes are formed according to the linguistic profiles of the participants, on the basis of literacy level assessment. Classes are divided into different levels depending on the assessment of the teachers and available spatial, material and human resources. In addition to adult education, there is a homework support group for the young girls who are registered in secondary and high schools. An intensive introductory cycle is vital in order to organize these classes every day for the refugee and migrant women to have basic communication skills as the first important step to understand society at the local level.

For mothers with children who go to school:

To organize mock-talks in language classes as a role play in which the participants communicate with educators at public schools for their children's progress at school.

Tips:

Melissa Network provides the below supplies & information enabling the participants to fully engage in classes and activities:

- Bags with educational materials (notebooks, files, pens, pencils, erasers).
- Monthly public transportation cards for all participants so they can be mobile within the city.
- Shares any free activity happening in the city and promote going out on week-

ends as well as weekdays, including child-friendly events, cultural festivals from different migrant groups in Athens.

- The teachers use maps, visuals, video clips, music videos to make the learning experience more interactive and vibrant.
- The teachers who support school girls, are also in communication with the school teachers if necessary, regarding the progress of the school girls.

“Here we learn more about one another in one day than in months of living together in the same camps”

Shakiba, 26, The first day of Greek courses at Melissa

Useful Resources:

A charter about education for democratic citizenship published by the Council of Europe:

<http://www.living-democracy.gr/students/>

From the Greek ombudsman, a charter for obtaining the Greek citizenship:

<https://www.synigoros.gr/?i=human-rights.en>

From actionaid, a book called: active citizen inside and outside the classroom:

<http://education.actionaid.gr/dunamikoi-ekpaideutikoi/vivlio-energou-politis/>

Foundation of Hellenic world that has all the Greek history:

<http://www.fhw.gr/chronos/>

A Blog on teaching Greek history:

<https://katoikonistoria.wordpress.com/>

A link that was created by the Ministry of culture with photos and many activities and information about Greek history and culture:

<http://followodyseus.culture.gr/>

2. PSYCHO-SOCIAL SUPPORT

Melissa Network has established a referral pathway to cover the needs of refugee women including counseling and psychological support, accommodation, legal aid, education and health.

From the moment, a refugee enters into the center, she encounters the Intakes Team, a group of social scientists who will listen to their stories and then guide them into the psychosocial support programs, where they can seek the support of social workers and psychologists.

The Social Work Team members provide ongoing support and make the appropriate referrals that will help the women navigate the system of social services, identify what they may benefit from and claim it and liaise with other organizations.

The Melissa Network psycho-social support has also been structured in order to provide a comprehensive approach to mental health. The resulting integrative module is trauma-informed and culturally aware.

The core pillar of this approach for the integration of migrant and refugee women is psycho-social support at different stages and at different levels for refugee and migrant women as individuals and as members of a community throughout the process of becoming an active citizen in the society.

The Psychological Team members have structured a comprehensive program of psychological support. This combines group psychotherapy which accommodates cultural diversity and creates a safe and nurturing environment where trust is built, with individual psychotherapy. In the first stages of group psychotherapy, emphasis is given to the use of non-verbal means, so as to transcend the language barrier.

The psychological support scheme consists of the following elements:

- Drama and Movement Group Therapy (Sesame Approach)
- Psychodrama Group Psychotherapy
- Parenting Group Counselling
- Individual Psychotherapy
- EMDR Individual Sessions

All three teams work closely with the Team of Interpreters and Cultural Mediators who facilitate access and enable the sharing process.

The overall emphasis is on the agency and centrality of each person, aiming to provide them with sufficient tools to engage actively in the healing process and to become in turn, healing agents also for those around them.

2.1 GROUP PSYCHOTHERAPY

Duration: 1-2 times a week for each group for 90 minutes

Class size: Approximately 15 participants with translators

Objectives:

- To create a safe therapeutic environment for the women, where they can express their feelings
- To enhance their creativity and spontaneity
- To provide a sense of stability and belonging
- To develop relationships of trust and security among the participants
- To increase empathy among interpersonal relationships
- To restore psychological trauma
- To decrease stress
- To promote self-awareness and self-confidence

“It is a life-rehearsal without the fear of being punished”

Marcia Karp

Methodology:

Drama and Movement Therapy

Drama and Movement Therapy is a form of psychological therapy in which all of the performance arts are utilised within the therapeutic relationship (Badth definition). In particular, the Sesame approach emphasises the importance of non-verbal expression and communication in the therapeutic context. Following the belief that the body is the symbol of the self, it allows the participants to explore their creative potential and connects them with their own innate healing capacity. The approach is oblique and non-confrontational, qualities that are ideal in a therapeutic process dealing with severe psychological trauma. The use of metaphor provides a protective shield towards the active trauma and allows the participants to explore their feelings in a safe and contained therapeutic environment, which functions through the universal language of the body. It also engages the women in a gentle introduction to the realm of psychotherapy, something completely unknown to most of them. Through the use of movement, ritual, play, story enactment, improvisation and voice their creativity and spontaneity is empowered and their feelings of hopelessness and anguish are effectively reduced. Their burdened intellectual function is decompressed and their emotions find a safe passage to the outside. The Sesame approach has a long history in mental health settings in the UK. It is based on theories of Carl Jung’s psychol-

ogy of the unconscious, Rudolf Laban's Art of Movement, Peter Slade's work in children's play and Marian Lindkvist's non-verbal language of Movement-with-Touch-and-Sound (MTS).

“Moving my body in this group
makes me feel less connected to fear and death.
It reminds me I'm alive”

M. 17, Syria

“This group helps me to help myself”

Y. 26, Iran

“After moving with myself and with others
my constantly stressed body feels light and alive”

S. 25, Iran

2.2 PSYCHODRAMA

Psychodrama is a group therapy method which was invented by the psychiatrist J. L. Moreno. It is the original form of group psychotherapy. In a psychodramatic group the participants have the chance to embody past, present or future points of their lives and to explore them creatively with the help of the therapist and the group. Internal thoughts, memories, dreams and hopes come to life through the element of action and the dynamic relationships between the members of the group.

Through role playing and role reversal the participants have the opportunity to embody roles that they never had the chance to experience. This empowering method has as an ultimate goal to encourage the participants' spontaneity and authentic self through the cathartic quality of dramatic expression as well as through the safe and meaningful connections among the participants. Psychodrama is a life-rehearsal without the fear of being punished.

Psychodrama is used during the second period of the groups' therapeutic process. It is only after the groups have built trust and stability through the extensive use of Drama and Movement Therapy that the participants start to share their personal stories and experiences. At this period the participants express their desire to talk about their lives, their memories and thoughts and the therapists help them explore this material through psychodramatic action.

“Experiencing myself in different roles makes me feel liberated. There’s nothing I can’t be.”

R. 27, Afghanistan

“After the group sessions and talking to the psychologist, I felt much better. I do not feel like sleeping and not doing anything anymore. I hold onto life.”

F. 23, Afghanistan

“After every session, I feel relaxed and happy. I can even sleep at night without taking any medication. Normally, every time I go to sleep my mind starts thinking and I become very anxious. It is impossible then to fall asleep.”

P. 33, Iran

2.3 PARENTING WORKSHOPS

Duration: Once a week for each group for 90 minutes

Class size: 6-8 mothers with translators

Objective:

To promote effective parenting practices and strengthen the mother-child relationship.

Methodology:

The parenting counselling is conducted in a series of weekly psychoeducational sessions, in a form of a discussion group. Each week a certain topic is processed by the group members, after a short introduction by the facilitator, which includes the presentation of related audiovisual material (where necessary) and/or a presentation of related case vignettes.

Topic selection:

- a) is made after an initial assessment of mothers’ needs or concerns regarding motherhood
- b) is based on current empirically supported clinical theories on mother-child relationship such as attachment theory (Bowlby, Ainsworth, Main) and reflective functioning theory (Fonagy, Target, Slade), the latest psychological theories related to

children's early development and wellbeing (see www.zerotothree.org) and Official guidelines according to World Health Organization.

Topics usually processed in the group:

- Feeding and sleeping practices (focusing on mothers of babies and toddlers).
- Regulating children's emotions: Information concerning how stress and anxiety are experienced by children.
- The importance of the mother-child relationship: Focusing on attachment and mother-child interaction.
- What is like to "be a mother": The group members share their experiences and difficulties concerning motherhood.
- How to handle "difficult behaviors" such as aggressive behavior or oppositionality.
- Kindergarten readiness
- Regulating sleeping, eating and feeding
- Bilingualism
- Cognitive development of toddlers
- Understanding my child: How to reflect on and give meaning to my child 's behavior and thinking
- The art of setting boundaries

2.4 INDIVIDUAL PSYCHOTHERAPY

Duration: Once a week for 45 minutes

Individual psychotherapy usually works supplementarily to group psychotherapy, in case a beneficiary expresses the need to talk in a more private environment. The approach used by the therapists is psychodynamic and includes elements of Drama and Movement Therapy, Psychodrama and EMDR when considered appropriate. In this context the women share more intimate aspects of their lives and usually explore issues of Gender Based Violence.

In most cases there is a cultural mediator present, who is guided and supported by the therapist throughout the therapeutic process.

3. INFORMATION & REFERRALS

Social scientists and social workers at the center are knowledgeable on existing services at various organizations by taking part in existing coordination meetings by the municipality or by other non-profit organizations. Moreover, they build networks and subscribe to receive emails from organizations and municipal networks on new services and new organizations existing in their local contexts. Collaborations with other NGOs and local authorities are key elements for referrals and organizing information sessions depending on participants' information needs and demands. On specific topics, trained professionals join these sessions in order to provide general information, make needs assessment and also offer individual advice.

Info sessions and referrals raise awareness of refugee women on sensitive issues and prevention regarding health issues, rights and obligations in Greece allowing them to get to know the laws and culture, resources and services of the host society. Sessions and trainings are conducted in collaboration with other NGOs and local authorities that include information on available resources and access to social services, sessions on specific topics such as:

Social and emotional empowerment of women facing human rights violations is strengthened through a holistic approach in legal proceedings. In this process, secondary victimization may only be prevented through a variety of actions if women are adequately informed, supported by defenders with the appropriate knowledge and expertise.

Objectives:

- To raise awareness of the participants on sensitive issues and prevention regarding health issues, rights and obligation in Greece allowing them to get in touch with the host societies, laws and cultures.
- To facilitate access to services and provide information on:
 - Asylum rights and refugee law
 - Human rights
 - Women's health & children's health
 - Sexual and reproductive health issues
 - Gender-based violence
 - Early marriage
 - Pregnancy and infant care

3.1 SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE PREVENTION AND RESPONSE

Challenging and going beyond social protection models for survivors of gender-based violence, Melissa's activities are aiming at preventing Gender Based Violence and limiting the consequences of the survivors, through various approaches and tools.

The following document will highlight the steps and procedures for setting up the case management structure of Melissa as well as fostering the current prevention and response activities provided.

The structure to respond to GBV is constituted by:

- GBV outreach
- GBV prevention activities
- GBV case management

3.1.a. GBV Outreach

Community outreach is important in order to raise awareness on individual rights and instruments to protect them, as well as available services to respond to the violation of rights.

Outreach activities, such as the provision of information dissemination and risk identification and mitigation is suggested to be conducted on a regular basis with the participants. It is important for the case worker to conduct outreach by herself so that she can gain the trust of the beneficiaries.

Furthermore, it is suggested to mainstream GBV awareness across all personnel. Melissa staff is trained to be aware of the types of GBV, root causes of GBV and safe referrals.

3.1.b. GBV Prevention

A solid outreach is the basis for the prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence. Prevention activities generally refer to actions taken to stop GBV from happening at first. Such actions include working with communities to promote gender equalities as well as working with men and boys to address practices that contribute to GBV.

Melissa provides such activities also for the boys attending the activities of the daycare for children. Working with children is key to block gender stereotypes from perpetrating.

Tailored discussions and games with children in a gender-neutral environment will provide them with the tools to prevent the expansion of GBV and will mitigate the risk of exposure to GBV in the household.

3.1.c. GBV Case Management

GBV case management is a structured method for providing help to a survivor whereby the survivor is informed of all the options available to them and the issues and problems facing a survivor are identified and followed up in a coordinated way, and emotional support is provided to the survivor throughout the process.

Case management is conducted by the social worker:

- Survivors will get an appointment with the social worker and their cases will be dealt individually.
- The social worker will assess the survivor's needs (medical, safety, psychosocial, legal) and will be in charge of updating and actualising the referral pathway, including evaluating the quality of services provided taking into consideration the feedback given by the survivors.
- Case management has also become the primary entry point for survivors to receive crisis and longer-term psychosocial support, given the lack of alternative more established health and social support service providers.

Melissa has a team of psychologists/psychotherapists to whom the psychosocial needs of the survivor are referred to.

Case Management follows a 7 step approach:

- **Step 1: Introduction**
It is the caseworker's first chance to develop rapport with a survivor and build a foundation for a healing relationship.
- **Step 2: Assessment**
Understand the survivor's situation and identify needs
- **Step 3: Case action planning**
Develop the case action plan based on the assessment. Obtain consent for making referrals and document the plan
- **Step 4: Implementation**
Assist and advocate for survivors to obtain quality services. Provide direct interventions, if appropriate (psychosocial) Lead case coordination.
- **Step 5: Case follow up**
Follow up on the case and monitor progress Implement a revised action plan (if needed).
- **Step 6: Case closure**
Assess and plan for case closure
- **Step 7: Survey**
Conduct a client feedback survey with the survivor.

The social worker is in charge of all these steps as well as filling out the correct forms and keeping the data collection tool up to date. In addition, staff members are trained in safety assessment and planning.

Safety assessment and planning steps include:

- Identifying dangerous circumstances
- Assessing risk of escalating violence

Assessment of Intimate Partner Violence Risk steps include:

- Identify her existing responses
- Identify her existing resources
- Exploring safety strategies
- Discuss what happens if she needs or decides to leave

A comprehensive SGBV module has been developed on the basis of the following sources, and is available upon request:

"MySafety MyWellbeing - Save the Children's Resource Centre."

https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/sites/default/files/documents/irc_my_safety_my_wellbeing_curriculum_for_adolescent_girls_1.pdf

"Interagency Gender-Based Violence Case Management Guidelines" 3 Jun. 2017

<https://reliefweb.int/report/world/interagency-gender-based-violence-case-management-guidelines>

"IRC 2011 GBV Emergency Response & Preparedness Participant"

http://cpwg.net/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2013/08/IRC-2011-GBV_ERP_Participant_Handbook_-_REVISED.pdf

3.2 LEGAL INFORMATION SESSIONS: INTRODUCTION TO RIGHTS AND ANALYSIS OF VIOLATIONS FOR MIGRANTS AND REFUGEE WOMEN

As assessed at Melissa, refugee and migrant women have been facing difference of treatment, rights violation obviously creating a feeling of injustice. Melissa started including legal sessions in its program focusing on informing on human rights, analysing their impact on everyday life, disclosing their violation so as to consider solutions through the consultations. The workshops are designed on an objective approach of fundamental rights coupled with sharing of experienced, peer learning with emphasis on not emitting judgments, offend culture, religion or habit in between the participants.

Objectives for the participants:

- To create a safe space and a supportive network based on trust, where women can share their experiences.
- To empower women by knowing what their rights are and their de facto obligations in their new host society.
- To give them the opportunity to make their own choices.
- To claim and exercise these rights.
- To assess violations.
- To get the confidence to stand for their rights.
- To have an overall picture of how the host society functions and its legal framework.

Objectives for the organization and the communities:

- To acquire in-depth knowledge and detailed analysis of the rights violations, issues and gaps in procedures faced by the women participants.
- To develop its own advocacy strategy that will be based on grassroots feedback.
- To create community-based advocacy working groups, giving women a space to stand for their rights.

Methodology:

The workshops are based on the active participation of the women through experience-sharing and peer-learning so that they understand and claim their rights and feel empowered to face rights violation situations.

Duration: 90 minutes per session (2 hour) once a week

Participation: a maximum of 12 women & translators

A moderated discussion on the following topics and in the following order:

Workshop 1: Introduction to Rights and Human Rights.

- What does it mean to have rights? What do Human Rights mean?

- Presentation and open discussion on:
 - Right to equality
 - Right to freedom of discrimination
 - Right to free movement
 - Right to marriage and family
 - Right to education
 - Freedom of belief and religion.

Workshop 2: Women's Rights regarding family

- The right to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage and its corollary (marriage or free union, divorce)
- The right to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of children and its corollary (Legal to have children outside of the marriage or alone, right to take contraception, right to abortion)

Workshop 3: Women's Rights regarding education and work

- Right to equal access to education and studies (Education obligation, No discrimination to access school)
- Right to work and choose freely a profession (Prohibition of forced labour, access to all professions, Hiring discrimination)

Workshop 4: Introduction to Gender Based Violence

- Definition of Violence and description of the wide character of GBV
- Crocodile river story activity* (From a story of different degrees of violence, discuss with the participants and rank characters of the story from the most offensive to the less, and justify)

Workshop 5: Assessing Gender Based Violence Description of the different violence categories

- Examining violence and rights violation to reduce it?
(open questions and discussion)

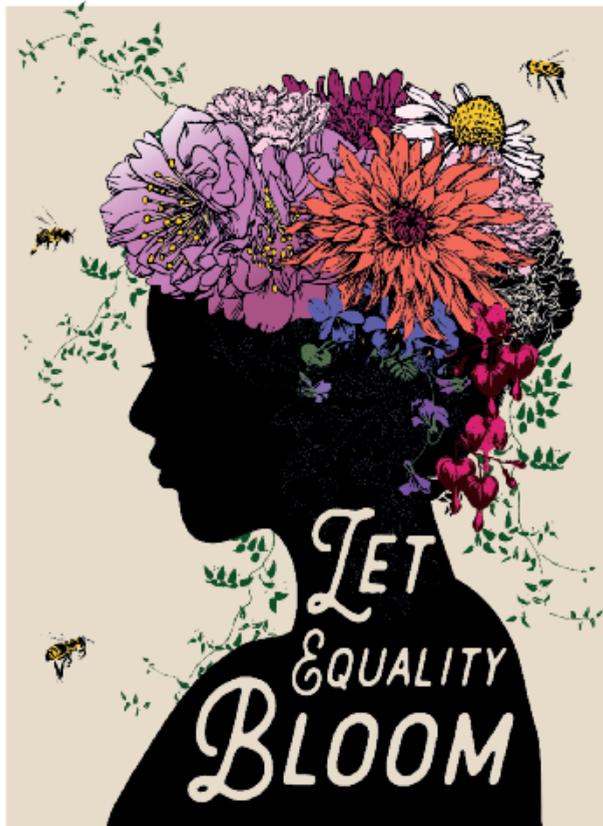
Workshop 6: Basic and Fundamentals Rights

- Presentation of different rights and their corollaries (Right to respect for private and family life, freedom of thought-conscience and religion, freedom of expression)
- Deepening and analysing relevant rights according to the participants (Ex: The right for private and family life can be treated differently with teenagers participants by focusing on the right to correspondence and also approach its limits as well as the use of social media.)

Workshop 7: Labour Rights

- Presentation of Education and Work Permit Legislation Detailed Presentation of employment conditions in Greece

Additionally, the individual sessions held with the participants allow Melissa's legal experts to assess and witness the failures of the policies for protecting women, repeated misconducts, bad practices and violations of their rights. The lack of expertise on SG-BV of relevant stakeholders reproduces conscious and/or unconscious gender-based discrimination in which women are at the frontline enduring the consequences. At Melissa, it has been noted that many of the participants have been facing a difference of treatment thus, obviously creating frustration and feeling of injustice but without awareness that their fundamental rights are flouted. Holding regular legal info sessions promote active participation of the women through sharing of experiences, peer learning, and providing legal information so that the participants start to claim their rights directly and are empowered to face rights violation situations. Being legally and adequately informed, enables women to become independent and confident to take action in case of being discriminated in their daily life (by public services, institutions and/or state authorities or in the domestic domain).



4. MEDIA & ADVOCACY

Melissa Network's advocacy work covers multi-media training, where participants write their own stories, learn basic techniques of public speaking and presentation skills. This strand aims to build among participants their confidence to speak for their rights and demands, and engage in the advocacy process where they can be agents of change in their own transformation.

The workshops consist of the following subjects:

- Media use workshops
- Fake news
- Interview trainings
- Public Speaking coaching
- Use of social media
- Creative writing and personal narratives

Duration: Once a week – 90 minutes

Class size: 15-20 participants with translators

Objectives:

- To promote toolkits for refugee and migrant women to assess and speak up for issues regarding their conditions in the camps, in the shelters, in the urban settings
- To discuss how to improve these conditions with and with which resources
- To question, overcome and resist against the logic of stereotypes and cliché of associating women with vulnerability and “victimization”
- To accompany refugee women in the advocacy process where they are actors of change, feel legitimate and comfortable into claiming their rights
- To propose sustainable solutions
- To be an agent in media to speak up for their rights and demands.

The output from the audio-visual and film productions are presented to the communities, schools, community centers, followed by discussions to clarify misconceptions and to remove stereotypes about migrants and refugees, which creates the circumstances for an engaging dialogue with the locals and gives the opportunity to promote a positive social narrative.

Methodology:

- Case studies on media coverage
- Content analysis
- A hands-on approach

Description of activities:

In each session, every two participants have a computer to work on their own media/advocacy project and in this reporting period our participants worked on how to be a journalist by focusing on the following issues:

- Internet and journalism.
- Communicate with media journalists (practices).
- Write articles and basic rules of content production.
- Prepare articles for publication.
- The art of photography.
- Publish articles and photographs, including legal and technical issues.



5. ART & CREATIVITY

The Art and Creativity strand encompasses a range of events and activities that facilitate expression and contribute to the process of opening up and sharing. This process also restores hope and balance, as it allows the imagination to flourish.

Various workshops take place within this context, including the following:

- Visual arts
- Poetry
- Creative writing
- Music
- Hip-Hop
- Film & digital storytelling
- Photography
- Crafts

5.1 VISUAL ARTS

A community art program focusing on giving women the opportunity to explore the following issues:

- Women's roles and challenges
- Femininity and masculinity / stereotypes
- Motherhood
- Motherhood alone
- Maternal instincts
- Women and age
- Women's strength

Some of the techniques introduced include:

- Life drawing
- Blind drawing
- Collage
- Linoleum cut and printing
- Canvas painting
- Self portraiture
- Portraiture
- Public Art
- Site-specific Art
- Intervention Art
- Mixed media
- Digital media

- Movie making and editing
- Group projects and group pieces

Duration: Once a week – 90 minutes

Class size: 15-20 participants with translators

Objectives:

- Learning drawing techniques and producing different sketches.
- Increasing group interaction using different drawing techniques and colors.
- Expressing feelings through colors
- Increasing dialogue between participants.

Description of activities:

- Engage participants to be focused on different themes each week such as doing their own self-portraits on canvases with a special technique. This project is to celebrate our strength and to have self-awareness about our bodily and spiritual selves by playing with colors and shapes of our features.
- Explore a range of techniques including pastels, colored pencils, and watercolor to express their feelings and understanding of their current situation. It created a comfortable space for the participants to engage in art work, exploring notions of identity through visual means, but also as part of a group, producing collective murals and creating collages of their personal experiences and life’s journey.

The workshops are led by Iranian painter Suzanah Rafizadeh and by Greek-American public artist Eileen Botsford, as well as by a range of local and visiting artists, often in partnership with museums and cultural institutions.



5.2 POETRY

The aim of the poetry workshop coincides with the core aim of the organization: promoting migrant women's voices and telling their stories in their own words. The poetry workshop series is led by the MacArthur Award winning American poet Alicia E. Stallings. Through the workshops, she experiments with a broad range of methods and tools in order to facilitate creative writing and expression among the migrant and refugee women who participate.

The workshop she conducts at Melissa experiments with list and acrostic poems from the women's first names serving as identity statements beyond the names and the labels attached in the course of migration. These become their first attempts to express themselves and revalidate scattered experiences, playfully allowing for creative experimentation and enable meaningful sharing. Free-form writing is encouraged and the poems are written in English or the native languages of the refugee women. They are then translated with the help of interpreters who participate in the workshops, recited in the original and discussed.

Through this process, the refugee women participating in the workshops, have developed storytelling skills and have been empowered to share their stories and experiences for a wider audience. Various poems have already been presented and published while a poetry collection is being prepared.

Internationally acclaimed poets regularly join the sessions, either while visiting or via Skype (i.e. Libyan poet Khaled Mattawa, British poet Ruth Padel, Iranian poet Fatemah Shams, etc).

The poetry group, which meets fortnightly, has become one of the most popular workshops as well as a hub attracting many journalists, students and academics who wish to attend and observe. It has also attracted artists and intellectuals who wish to partake in this creative exchange.

“She’s the new life. She’s the greatest She. What do I describe?
She gives birth to women who can live. She brings them to life
and takes care of them. She carries the smell of the Lilly.
She makes you feel like a lost child who finds her mother.”

A poem about Melissa by Asma Alheder, Syria

5.3 FILM CLUB

Duration: Once a week – 120 minutes

Class size: 15-20 participants with translators

Description of Activity:

Participants use cameras to explore and depict their daily lives in Athens. They work together with the moderators on developing the story-lines, through an interactive process that enables them to get full control of the outcome. Moderators discuss different movie genres from different contexts.

Objectives:

Melissa Network's film club aims to challenge xenophobic, hegemonic and over-simplified representations of refugees and migrant women by empowering our members to present their lives and their pursuits from their own angles, reclaiming their gaze and creating cinematic narratives of their own. The film club provides participants with a sense of personal agency and achievement.

Participants improve visual literacy, gain confidence and build friendships. Learning filmmaking techniques, sharing their favorite films and learning from one another's comments, they improve their ability to analyze visual material and critically reflect on storytelling. They gain confidence expressing their opinions and creative ideas in front of a group. Working together on film production teams, they communicate and bond with other participants, nurturing new friendships across cultures.

They build skills (filmmaking, photography, sound as well as creative and observational skills using mobile technology). They learn how framing, color, sound, character and story structure are used in film. They learn how to use video cameras, microphones, audio recorders, lights and video editing software. As a result, participants develop hard technical skills and are more prepared to participate in future personal, educational or work-related creative projects.

Film Club provides an open, exploratory forum for creative expression. Participants produce and direct original short films. Participants produce short documentary homework assignments as individuals and original short films in teams. Participants have creative control and explore Athens in shoots around the city. These films are a way for participants to share thoughts and stories that are important to them. It's a way for refugee and migrant women to challenge mainstream media narratives by taking control into their own hands.

Within this context, a creative dialogue is generated and new friendships between members of the Melissa Network and local Greek high school students are forged, while storytelling skills are developed, related to real life situations and transitory environments. Participants present their films publicly at movie theater screenings in the neighborhood. This is an opportunity for participants to celebrate their accomplishments with their friends and family and for the Athens community to meet and learn

about the perspective of their young refugee and migrant woman neighbors. All films are carefully archived for future use at participants' discretion. Some films have also been submitted to international film festivals (i.e. Athens Ethnographic Film Festival) and have been screened outside Greece.

Methodology:

Participants learn filmmaking skills and creative self-expression. Through workshop discussions and projects, participants improve critical thinking, gain confidence and build friendships. Their videos challenge mainstream media narratives by taking control into their own hands and showing us Athens through their eyes. Melissa Network has previously provided film club workshops for members, with excellent results.

Meeting in weekly workshops, a creative group of young women from Afghanistan, Iran, Syria, Iraq and Sub-Saharan Africa share diverse experiences and perspectives to analyze their favorite movies from around the world, learn practical filmmaking skills and collaborate across cultures on original film productions that add urgent personal nuance and depth to the migration narrative. With most refugee aid dedicated to immediate needs, these women (ages 16-25) have been lacking in educational and social opportunities both in their country of origin and in Greece. Many have expressed interest to us in learning about films and learning how to use film to tell their stories.

The goal of workshop leaders is not to direct young refugee participants but to assist them in self-actualization and accomplishing their own filmmaking goals. Young refugee women are involved at every stage of this process. Many have expressed interest to us in learning about films and learning how to use film to tell their stories. In film club, refugees are encouraged to share their favorite videos and films with the group. Members bring their diverse perspectives, in order to discuss and debate themes, messages and how these films works relate to everyday life. They learn filmmaking techniques together from workshop leaders in workshop and experiment with equipment. They work together on short film productions. They choose the roles they want in these projects and define the types of stories they want to tell through film. They decide the films to show in screenings and give each other feedback. Public screenings are also organized (i.e. at Alcyonis Art Theatre), as well as film nights (such as going to Thissio open air cinema, the oldest open air cinema in Greece to watch a movie).

“We see the movie, some parts of them some people laugh and some people cry. You can think about the different feelings and your mind is opened. You can take experiences and you can use it in your real life.”

Mahboubeh, Film Club participant

“We get new ideas to do things. I think by the time I’m done with this club, I’m going to be a very good filmmaker.”

Eunice, Film Club participant

“I like most about film club that we make videos... I like the discussions that we have at the end of the videos.”

Bahareh, Film Club participant



5.4 MUSIC WORKSHOPS

Duration: 90 minutes

Class size: 15-20 participants with translators

Objectives:

- To share their own musical tastes and traditions and learn from each other's cultural heritage and contemporary cultural production.
- To experiment with different genres (i.e. hip-hop), music instruments and harmonic sounds.
- To learn how to create a common rhythm and combine it with lyrics.
- To play ethnic songs from different countries, dance and sing.

Description of activities:

- Engage participants to be focused on different music genres each week.
- Invite participants to sing in their own voices and train the rest of the group to play an instrument in a rhythmic manner to accompany a song of their own choice.
- Engage participants in a choir.
- Choose songs for singing in the choir.
- To perform singing in important days such as International Women's Day, Eid, Nowroz and Mother's Day.

Music workshops are conducted by musicians, artists, music pedagogy experts and ethnomusicologists, as well as in partnership with music groups and choirs (i.e. Athens Opera House, Breakfast Club etc).

5.5. CRAFTS WORKSHOPS

Duration: Once or twice a week – 120 minutes

Class size: 15-20 participants with translators

Description of activities:

- Origami
- Card-making
- Papier-mâché
- Recycling
- Jewelry-making
- Knitting & crochet
- Ethnic crafts (i.e. Ukrainian Vyshyvanka)

Craft workshops are regularly held in cooperation with various migrant communities as part of the cultural exchanges and skill-sharing programs, or with volunteer groups

and entrepreneurs (i.e. Katerina Psoma Jewelry). They provide a creative opportunity where people can be together, showcase and share what they know or learn something new, through a skill-sharing process. This may also lead to income-generating opportunities in partnership with markets and various initiatives (i.e. Kypseli Municipal Market).



6. SKILLS & CAPACITY BUILDING

A range of skill-building activities take place at Melissa regularly. The process begins by identifying and strengthening existing skills as well as creating re-skilling opportunities. The aim of this strand of activities is dual: a) to create income-generating opportunities and facilitate access to the labour market, and b) to build leadership skills. Experts and educators, as well as members of the migrant and refugee communities and volunteers engage in this process, leading a range of vocational, cooperative, leadership and other trainings and workshops.

The capacity-building workshops include:

- team-building
- leadership training
- cooperative training
- coding and basic computer literacy
- employability support
- business coaching
- first aid
- psychological first aid (PFA)

The vocational training workshops include:

- sewing & design
- knitting
- crafts
- silk-printing
- soap-making
- recycling
- cooking
- infant massage training

6.1 EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT

Step 1: Intake forms

Step 2: Social history focus groups

Step 3: Personal interviews

Step 4: Trainings

Step 5: Referrals, opportunities and networking

After the initial phase of participation, special sessions take place to fill a social history form in order to gather basic information about our participants including their skills, education and employment history. Through this process, existing skills, tal-

ents and resources are identified. The center provides general employability support including the following:

- CV preparation
- CV development
- Cover letter preparation
- Job search
- Job application
- Interview preparation
- Mock interviews
- Follow-up after job interviews
- Follow-up the process after employment
- Inform our participants to attend social events and fairs to present their skills to the public (i.e. Refugee Food Festival organized by UNHCR)
- Encourage and support their initiatives
- Identify opportunities
- Provide cooperative training
- Provide business coaching in partnership with specialized organizations (i.e. IRC, Solidarity Now)
- Help design employment and entrepreneurship strategies
- Provide paid internship and employment opportunities at the Melissa shelters (run in partnership with The Home Project)
- Liaising and networking with mentoring, employability and micro-financing initiatives
- Provide recommendation letters

Duration: Each working day whenever necessary or requested

Size: One to one

Objectives:

- To realize and improve existing skills
- To prepare job readiness
- To develop job search tools and acquire application experience
- To prepare for job interviews

6.2 CAPACITY BUILDING TRAINING

Skills and Capacity-Building is intended to build the capacity of migrant and refugee women by providing training on additional skills on computer technology, media and filmmaking, hand crafts such as jewelry making, cooking and other soft skills such as cv writing, cooperative and entrepreneurial trainings. Leadership seminars are also conducted, to women leaders to enable them to lead and manage their organizations and communities. The leadership training focuses on leadership principles, and organizational management but mostly taking stock of their actual experiences. It provides a space for sharing practical knowledge and skills needed by migrants in leading and running their organizations. It also includes skills on advocacy for the recognition of migrants' rights, on community development and management of projects and activities and facilitation skills.

Community facilitators would need to localize and enrich the training material using their own stories, examples and cases appropriate to the particular context and situation of the participants.

Before going into the actual training, it is necessary to do a presentation of migrants, organizations or communities of the participants. This is necessary in order to provide the wider social context within which their organizations operate, which should always be considered in leading, managing and running an organization. This part should be based on and suited to the particular background and situation of the participants.

The methodology used in training is interactive — through the conduct of workshops, role-playing and practicum to develop certain leadership skills of the participants. The facilitators will provide the basic inputs of the training, but the participants will learn from their own practice and experiences during the training. The duration of the training is flexible, depending on the level of experience, literacy, needs and expectations of the participants.

6.3 INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND CODING WORKSHOPS

Duration: Weekly – 90 minutes

Class size: 15-20 participants

Objectives:

- To learn basic computer parts with visual materials, such as input/output devices/peripherals
- To learn keyboard basic functions
- To search engines
- To learn image search
- To open and structure folder/files
- To save documents
- To learn basics of PowerPoint (Slides, Transitions, Animations, Slide show)
- To learn basic of Word: -Font sizes -Italics -Bold -Underline -Text boxes -Indentation -Color -Bullet points -Shapes
- To learn Excel basics
- Addition, subtraction, multiplication, division
- Sum, max, min, average
- Graphs
- To learn animation – use of Stop Motion Studio App
- Encryption
- Binary to denary conversion
- Minecraft coding



7. SELF-CARE & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Melissa Network values the care of the self and considers it vital for the social responsibilities they undertake and the implementation of their life strategies. At the same time, it acknowledges the importance of community and the burdens created by the rupture of social networks that migration entails, and values community engagement and initiatives that highlight the unique input of women.

On a daily basis Melissa provides a range of opportunities for the women to dedicate time to their well-being and benefit from healing activities. It also provides opportunities to engage in community initiatives where they can share and learn from one another, build networks and find strength and support.

7.1 SELF-CARE

- Stress management
- Acupuncture
- Breathing & Meditation techniques
- Mindfulness
- Feldenkrais method
- Yoga
- Dance
- Gyro-kinetics
- Self-defense

7.1.a Acupuncture

Duration: Weekly

Objectives:

- To provide trauma healing ear acupuncture to people affected by natural disasters and human conflict.
- To help reduce post-traumatic stress symptoms, including pain, insomnia, anxiety and depression.
- To help regulating the nervous system so that people can better deal with challenges.

7.1.b. Yoga

Duration: Weekly

Objectives:

- To improve body posture and coordination as well as concentration through breathing, stretching and movements techniques.
- To have a fresh start of the daily program.
- To feel relaxed after the daily activities.

7.1.c. Mindfulness – Meditation

Duration: Weekly - Monthly

Objectives:

- To raise self-awareness and meditation
- To do breathing exercises to relax
- To practice being present and calmly handling ongoing challenges

7.1.d. Stress Management

Duration: Weekly – 90 minutes

Class size: 8-10 participants

Objectives:

- To learn different breathing techniques.
- To learn simple meditation steps.
- To teach relaxation using breathing meditation yoga.
- To laugh and let go.

Description of the activities:

A basic meditation and breathing sequence takes place for enhancing sharing and community building. Through the Farsi and Arabic translators communication, the terms explanation and instructions make it easier to reach the goal and to involve all the participants following the therapy.



7.2 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The ongoing involvement of migrant women leaders with a solid background in community organizing is a primary component of Melissa Network's community-based approach to social cohesion. Following the active participation of the women's migrant communities to social/cultural innovation through various activities and events Melissa Network has partnered with ELIAMEP and have launched "The Bridge Initiative" bringing together various migrant projects led by women community leaders.

The ongoing projects consist of:

1. "The Stone Flower" (Το Πέτρινο Λουλούδι): A theatrical play by the Raduga Russian community which took place at the Municipal Market of Kypseli, December 2018. As part of an effort to bring art and culture closer and available to the general public, the Russian cultural club Raduga presented "The Stone Flower" - a tale written by Russian writer Pavel Bazow. The main purpose of the theatrical performance was to exchange different good practices with other migrant organizations while fostering intercultural exchange at the local level and sensitizing different community stakeholders through cultural activities. Through the exchange of culture with the host and migrant communities, the event managed to promote communication as well as the values of coexistence and social cohesion.
2. "The Homeless Project": A project led by one of Melissa's first participants, Mahboubeh Tavakoli in partnership with the Afghan community, providing food for the homeless in the streets of Athens.

"Years have passed in Greece, but our concern and love for people in streets hasn't changed. Although we came here as a refugees, when we saw homeless people around Athens, we decided to help them. We give what we can and what we have. This time we were able to cook for 50 people.
Let's not forget our friends in the streets.
They are the most needy people right now!"

- Mahboubeh Tavakoli, Iran

3. "Bring colors for knowledge": A creative initiative led by the Ukrainian groups Borysthenes & Club of Ukrainian Women in Greece. The scope of the workshop is to paint a 70 sqm of wall at a public school of Athens, decorating it with traditional Ukrainian Petrykivka motives, and to decorate the walls of a prison with embroidered panels.

B) CHILDCARE PROGRAM

In order to enable attendance for refugee mothers, Melissa Network provides a parallel childcare program in partnership with the Munting Nayon Multi-Cultural Daycare School of the Kasapi Philippino Community in Athens. This program provides educational as well as creative and recreational activities for children in a safe and friendly space, while their mothers are actively engaged in training and other activities.

The childcare program provides a safe and child friendly space with experienced teachers from Munting Nayon and with the support from the rest of the Melissa Network team as well as volunteers. The educators and volunteers initiate activities which include drawing, painting, crafts, recycling, cooking, baking, planting and mother tongue teaching for about 30 kids per day aged 1 to 12 years old. The aim is to develop recreational and educational activities for refugee and migrant children in order to allow their mothers to address their personal issues, while their children are safe in the child-friendly space of Melissa.

In addition, implementing joint activities for mothers and their children, helps bridge the gap of the two-gear integration process of the two generations (creative, educational and trust building workshops and activities for mothers and children as well as pre-natal cycle activities for pregnant women).

This program has minimized drop-out rates, making it possible for young mothers to join classes and benefit from the services and learning opportunities offered at Melissa, as well as the wider community life.



C) WITNESSING CHANGE:

Testimonies of Melissa Participants

"...if women stand behind one another and support each other, they can prove to the world that women are not weak, that they are not someone else's property or wealth, and that they can't be ignored or marginalised. This said, women represent the best of the world, for they excel all. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to close by asserting that a woman can rock the cradle with one hand and shake the world with the other."

Razia, 14, Afghanistan

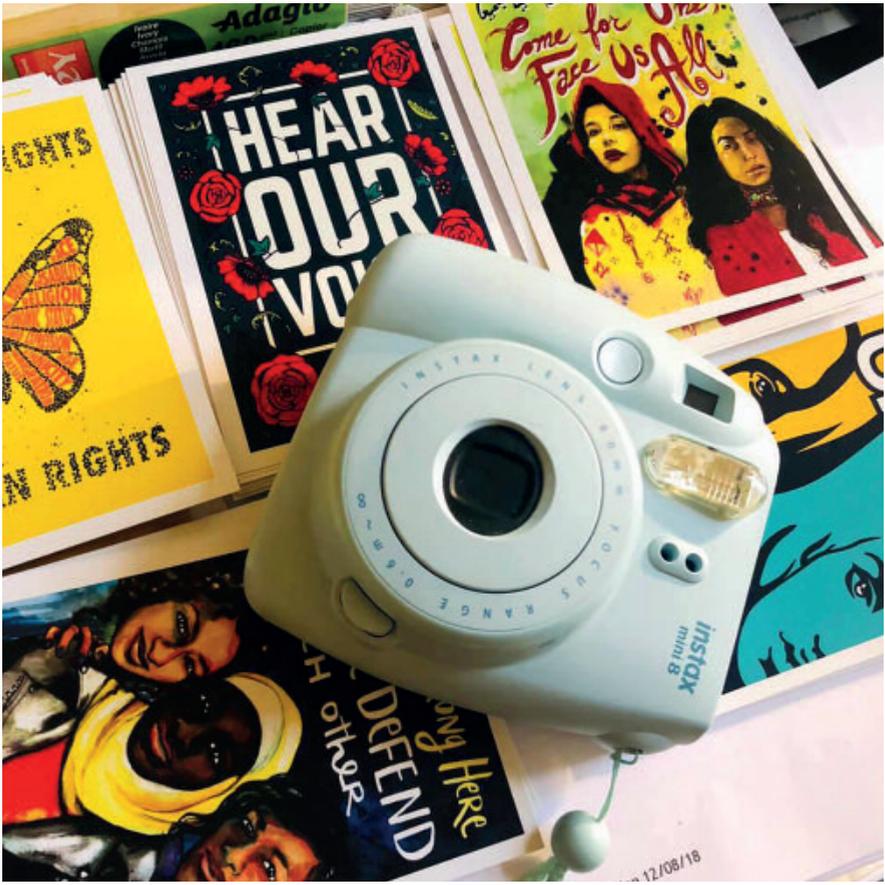
Women politics website: <https://women-politics.com/2017/10/06/poem/>

"They make me very strong [at Melissa]. They give me hope about the future ... as a person that can do everything. Now, I feel that at first I was like a bird, but now I feel that I can be a prime-minister in the future."

Marzia, 16, Afghanistan, Laura Flanders Show

"We talk about everything here at Melissa. And most of the things we exchange are good things, we talk less about our difficulties. Arabic is one of the difficulties we face because we speak different versions of it...we need to talk more about ourselves, our stories, the things we love... we need more translators. My dream is to learn a language that will help me to feel better in Europe. I want to thank our translators."

Aklima, 29, Iraq, Photo Voice workshops at Melissa



D) DEVELOPING ALTERNATIVE INDICATORS FOR TRACKING CHANGE AND ASSESSING IMPACT

By Meike Plötner

What kind of analysis?

Out of several theories for evaluation of empowerment a selection of tools were chosen:

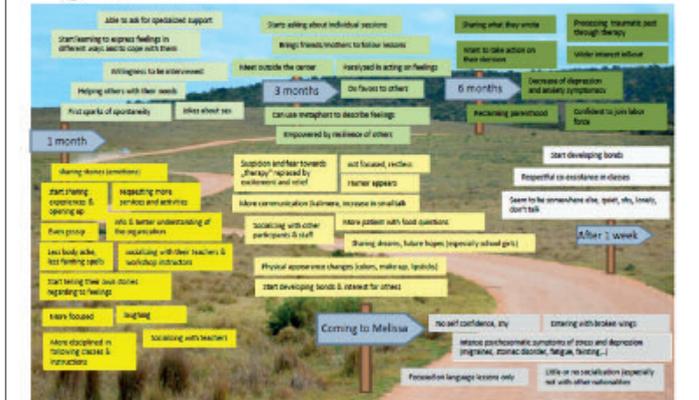
- ▶ **Outcome based approach tools**
 - Wilson Grau Outcome Harvesting
 - Helen Lindley Signposts
 - OutcomeStar Empowerment Star
- ▶ **Concept of power**
 - VeneKlasen, Miller Dimensions of power
- ▶ **Type of empowerment**
 - Sara Hlupekile Longwe Women's Empowerment Framework

Sara Lindley – Signposts

- ▶ *"Identifying 'Progress Markers' (...) these are descriptive statements which refer to a series of changes that the programs expect, would like to, and would love to achieve, particularly small changes, which are often overlooked but which also may be the first signs of progress in a program. In reference to a metaphor of a winding road, these changes are 'signposts' that let you know if you are going in the right direction."*



Signposts @ Melissa Network



Signpost – Findings

- long winding road but long due to repetition
- Stuck due to issues that originate outside Melissa's control
- When back has to start further down the road – snakes
- Frustration & doubt & loss of confidence
- If she drops out she needs:
 - to be strong enough want to start again & to look for another class & according to her level, time availability, costs
 - ... to then drop out again...and restart the same process all over
- Good news– Ladders are expressways
- Realizes that she can catch up
- Path is overcome quicker
- Can apply skills already learnt
- The further along the road the lesser snakes
- Bad news:
 - no indication where snakes and ladders await – can & will happen at several moments with several women at unforeseeable timing

Signpost – Lessons Learnt

- Teachers must understand and accept that they deal with an inhomogeneous group during the whole time
- Continuous dropouts during the whole course
- Expulsion forces the women to restart from beginning
- Embracing & encouraging returning women is the difference Melissa Network can make
- Learning process to overcome difficulties
- Experiencing drop outs and returns of other classmates, is an inspiring sign of resilience to problems and strengthens women to overcome own frustration and doubts



Wilson Grau – Outcome Harvesting

- ▶ *"is designed for situations where decision makers (...) are interested in learning about achievements rather than activities and about effects rather than implementation. It is especially useful when the aim is to understand the process of change and how each outcome contributes to this change rather, than simply to accumulate a list of results."*
- ▶ *"(...) focuses on tracking outcomes that result from changes in behavior, relationships, or activities of stakeholders"*

Outcome Harvesting – Findings

- ▶ Melissa Network as a Space & Network
 - Safe Space
 - Open ears and respect
 - Concept of sharing
 - Inspiring resilience of others
 - Jobs offered at Melissa Network/shelters for women
- ▶ Melissa Network as Learning Life Skills center
 - Learning a language
 - Creative overstimulation to find her own self
 - Guilt-free own well being
 - Trauma therapy
 - Learning how to express herself
 - Learning how to find tactics and to set boundaries
 - Reclaiming active parenthood

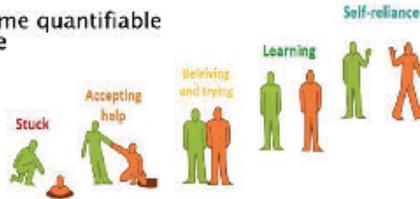
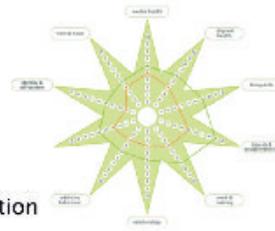
Outcome Harvesting – Lessons Learnt

- ▶ Language lessons @ Melissa are pull-factor and a magic box
- ▶ Keep group-composition -> stability and peace
- ▶ All skills learnt can be reapplied later and make women ready for future life whether in Greece, home country or elsewhere
 - Learn any language
 - Create a safe space
 - Use sisterhood & social support centers
 - Learn to set boundaries in all areas
 - Get relief through trauma therapy
- ▶ Once found their way of expression women are more focused to make a living of it
- ▶ Expression = voice ideas out = relieve = recovery and discovery



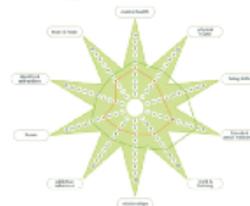
Outcome Star

- ▶ Easy to use evaluation tool
- ▶ Standardized reports
- ▶ Self-awareness & external perception
- ▶ Testimonials become quantifiable thanks to structure



Outcome Star – Findings

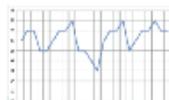
- ▶ Language classes uncover further beams of possible areas of assistance and services before unaware of
- ▶ Melissa's niche is performance in the levels 7 to 9
- ▶ Sharing information – natural concept of women and mothers included in learning and trying



Source: ©2014 The Public Health Learning and Innovation Research Centre, University of Melbourne

Star Analysis – Lessons Learnt

- ▶ Melissa Network's niche in "Learning and trying" along with decision, struggle, frustration and doubt needs more detailed description of loop movement
- ▶ Women at Melissa become natural communicators thanks to sharing experience with community
- ▶ Main beam is language classes & other beams are uncovered after women win confidence and feel safe with staff & classmates but are not core services offered at Melissa Network
- ▶ Every question for another service asked at Melissa Network equals uncovering one beam!
- ▶ Melissa is of help in other beams at lower levels
- ▶ The more beams uncovered the quicker the way forward as learnt skills can be used



VeneKlasen&Miller Dimensions of Power

Power over: The most commonly recognized form of power, power over, has many negative associations for people such as repression, wealth, force, coercion, discrimination, corruption and abuse. Power is seen as a win-lose kind of relationship. Having power involves taking it from someone else, and then using it to dominate and prevent others from gaining it.

Power within had to do with a person's sense of self-worth and self-knowledge. It includes an ability to recognize individual differences while respecting others. Power within is the capacity to imagine and have hope; it affirms the common human search for dignity and fulfillment.

Power to refers to the unique potential of every person to shape his or her life and world. When based on mutual support. It opens up the possibilities of joint action, or power with.

Power with has to do with finding common ground among different interests and building collective strength. Based on mutual support, solidarity, and collaboration, power with can help build bridges across different interests to transform or reduce social conflict.

VeneKlasen&Miller – Findings

With Melissa Network women become powerful again

Power within – waving together broken agents of identity

- ▶ Learning life skills (language, means of expression)
- ▶ Guilt-free own well-being
- ▶ Trauma-therapy for relief and
- ▶ Inspiring resilience of others



Power to – decide to choose & change

- ▶ Be able to see & choose own possibilities thanks to creative overstimulation
- ▶ Reclaim active parenthood
- ▶ Set boundaries
- ▶ Using life skills and choose an adequate position



Power with – the network

- ▶ Value of free expression and respect
- ▶ Building shared understanding and sisterhood
- ▶ Taking collective action to make an individual position stronger and make own voices heard



VeneKlasen&Miller – Lessons Learnt

- ▶ Frustration and abandon are lack of power within
- ▶ Women need support in self-confidence and self-awareness



- ▶ Knowledge of alternative powers facilitates sharing and makes women become natural communicators in their communities
- ▶ win-win situation as sharing information and empowerment does not prevent women from having access to the services but making their voices stronger
- ▶ Creating a safety net makes them able to rebuilt their network everywhere

Realms of Power

- ▶ *"the public realm of power concerns one's experience of public interactions in areas such as employment, livelihoods, market activities, public social spaces and the community"*
- ▶ *The private realm of power includes one's experience of family relationships, friends, marriage and the household, and is usually defined by the social, cultural and religious norms of these relationships*
- ▶ *The intimate realm of power concerns personal self-esteem, confidence, dignity, relationships to one's own body, reproductive health and sexuality"*

Realms of Power – Findings

Women might show different behavior at Melissa, their community or with their family

- ▶ **Choice:** choosing the best behavior for the situation making life possible, easy & bearable
- ▶ **Skill learnt:** ability to know when one is ready to change the behavior in any of the realms

Women Empowerment Framework Sara Hlupekile

- ▶ *"The five 'levels of equality' in the Women's Empowerment Framework include:*
- ▶ *1. Welfare, meaning improvement in socioeconomic status, such as income, better nutrition, etc. This level produces nothing to empower women.*
- ▶ *2. Access, meaning increased access to resources. This is the first step in empowerment as women increase their access relative to men.*
- ▶ *3. Conscientisation, involving the recognition of structural forces that disadvantage and discriminate against women coupled with the collective aim to address these discriminations.*
- ▶ *4. Mobilization, implementing actions related to the conscientisation of women.*
- ▶ *5. Control, involving the level of access reached and control of resources that have shifted as a result of collective claim making and action."*



Sara Hlupekile – Findings

- ▶ **Access:**
 - Learning life skills for future & life anywhere
 - Provide support
 - Provide space to test new skills
 - Trauma therapy to find inner peace
 - Stability and safe space to wave together the lost and broken agents of identity, in order to create their own safety net of skills to be able and confident to go forward and reach their goals
- ▶ **Conscientisation:**
 - Creative overstimulation, creation of guilt-free well-being and the ability to set boundaries
 - Network and support so women experience, that collective action can be successful
 - Introduction to sisterhood organizations in Greece and anywhere
 - Sharing experience and knowledge in community
 - reports and articles presenting results of Melissa

Sara Hlupekile – Lessons Learnt

- ▶ Mobilization and control in the area of empowerment and integration of refugee women are realized by civil rights groups & gender policy activists
- ▶ Melissa Network provides access and conscientisation thus real help to achieve equality which leads to empowerment



- ▶ Melissa Network provides help and support in the two areas that are most urgent and important for migrant and refugee women in their actual transitional phase

Next: Realist evaluation

- ▶ What works for whom in what circumstances and in what respect and how?
 - Mechanisms: what produces the outcomes?
 - Women want to start a new life
 - Europe – land of possibilities or – land of equality or– land of women rights
 - Women are fleeing the warzone
 - Resilience of others makes them believe they can also reach their dream
 - Success stories inspire other women
 - see other priorities
 - Context: elements conditions having an influence on mechanism
 - Safe space, respect, open ears, etc..
 - Learning environment for life skills
 - Outcomes: intended and unintended results
 - As seen before today
 - Context-mechanism-outcome pattern configuration is testing different interventions under different combinations of conditions
 - To explain why same support and classes offered in other NGOs have other result
 - how can other NGOs learn from findings at Melissa Network





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ENHANCING THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN, BENEFICIARIES OF INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION BY DEVELOPMENT AND
IMPLEMENTATION OF MULTIFACETED INTEGRATION

INTEGRA-TRAIN APPENDIX

Educational Material & Information

EDUCATIONAL MATERIAL AND USEFUL INFORMATION

Section 1: Gender Equality, Human Rights and Gender-Based Violence

Section 2: Modern Greek language, History and Politics

Section 3: Employment and Job Search

Section 4: Protection from Racist Attacks

Section 5: Preventing Violent Radicalization

Section 1:

Gender Equality and Gender-Based Violence

Aim of the section:

- To provide basic information about the legal status of gender equality in Greece as well as information about the Greek legislation on domestic violence.
- To provide basic information about human rights and women's human rights as well as related exercise material for the legal sessions.
- To provide help and advice in a sensitive manner to women and girls who may have been victims of trafficking and gender-based violence or who may want to help or support women or girls who have been victims of such violence.

How to use this section:

- In the info sessions with regards to women's rights in Greece.
- In the legal info sessions with regards to human rights and women's human rights.
- In psycho-social support for women who have suffered gender-based violence.
- In one-to-one sessions to provide advice and support to women and girls who are victim of gender-based violence or who seek to help others who have been victims of such violence.

1.1. GENDER EQUALITY IN GREECE

Gender equality is protected by the Constitution.

The Constitution 2001 (ΦΕΚ 85/Α/18-4-2001) defines that:

“Greek men and women have equal rights and responsibilities” (Article 4 par. 2)

“There is no distinction based on gender in taking positive measures to promote equality between men and women. The State is working to ensure the removal of all inequalities that exist today in practice, especially against women.” (Article 116 par. 2)

This is also reflected in national legislation, particularly in the following areas:

- Occupation – the harmony and coexistence of professional and social life
- Violence against women
- Human trafficking
- Social insurance
- Family law
- Participation of women in decision making centers
- Family health, welfare and protection
- Equality in access to goods and services

An analytical reference to these laws is available at the website of the General Secretary’s Office of Equality <http://www.isotita.gr/nomothesia/ethniki-nomothesia/>

1.2. GREEK LEGISLATION ON DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

Source Greek Police website, useful

advice: http://www.astynomia.gr/index.php?option=ozo_content&perform=view&id=2030&Itemid

Domestic violence is a crime punishable by the provisions of Law 3500/2006.

The practice of any kind of violence or abuse (psychological, physical, sexual), is prosecuted under the Law.

If you know someone who is the victim of intimidation, do not be afraid to share this with a parent, caretaker, friend, teacher, police officer or someone else whom you trust.

If you are a victim:

- Call 100 in the case of an immediate necessity, or communicate with your local police department. You can also call the SOS helpline for abused women, 15900. Tell them that you are being abused and ask for help.
- You have the right to file a lawsuit.
- The Greek police force takes every incident of domestic violence seriously.
- If you go to the hospital, do not hesitate to tell the truth about what happened to you.
- Reach out to the specialized services for abused women.

The General Secretariate for Gender Equality has been operating the Athens Counselling Centre since 1988. The centre provides FREE psychosocial support and legal counselling to women who are victims of violence. The goal of the services provided at the centre is the empowerment of women and the recovery of their self esteem, so that they can take responsibility for their professional, personal and family lives and make the best decisions for their futures.

Within the framework of providing support services for female victims of violence, the pan-Hellenic SOS Hotline for Abused Women, 15900, operates 24 hours a day - 365 days a year. The SOS Hotline has a staff of psychologists and social scientists who provide immediate

and direct help in emergency and urgent incidences of violence. They also provide informational and telephone counselling services to victims of all forms of gender-based violence.

SOS Helpline for abused women: 15900

e-mail: sos15900@isotita.gr

Athens Counselling Centre:

Nikis 11, Syntagma

tel: 210 - 3317305, 210 - 3317306

For more information, visit the following URL:

<http://www.isotita.gr/index.php/docs/c41>

1.3 CASE MANAGEMENT MATERIALS AND PROTOCOL

Safety assessment and planning

When assessing and planning for the safety of a survivor of intimate partner violence, it is important to get a sense of the perception of a survivor's safety in her household. Importance should be given to find out the circumstances in which the survivor (and the children) are in the most danger. Once these steps have been done, the attention should focus on determining whether the survivor is at risk of life threatening physical harm and find out the existing strategies and resources the survivor has and develop a plan for safety that incorporates these resources.

Identifying dangerous circumstances:

By using open ended questions encourage the survivor to think about past instances of violence.

Each perpetrator has different patterns of abuse, the scope of the safety assessment is to understand the patterns, helping the survivor to avoid or respond to them.

Can you tell me about some of the times you have felt most unsafe around your partner?

What is he doing, or what is his state of mind when you feel unsafe?

Are you in a particular place? Is it a certain time of the day? Are you with him or not? Is there anything specific that happens before the violence?

Assessing risk of escalating violence:

The following list of questions is made to understand the level of present danger. Any time the survivor is answering “yes” she is facing and increased risk of severe physical violence. With each additional “yes”, the potential danger level increases. It means that every action the survivor takes (including seeking help) is extremely risky. Script to introduce the risk assessment:

“I would like to ask you some questions about the violence you have been experiencing and about the behaviour of your partner. Some of these questions might be hard for you to answer, just do your best and please let me know when you need to take a break or if you don’t want to answer something. Please tell me “yes” or “no” or “I don’t know” when I ask the question”

Intimate Partner Violence Risk Assessment

How often have you had serious injuries. from the perpetrator in the past week?

If the perpetrator has caused life-threatening injuries in the past, he is more likely to kill. (i.e. hitting abdomen during the pregnancy, deep cuts, injury requiring hospitalisation, beating until the survivor loses consciousness, etc.)Safety Plan (for all staff members and interpreters)

A safety plan enables the survivor to proceed with a pre-determined course of action when she is in a life threatening situation. It helps her minimising the harm done by the perpetrator through the identification of resources and means to avoid harm and places she can go temporarily for safety.

How often is the violence happening?

If violence is frequent (more than once per week) and/or starts to escalate and become more severe, the survivor may be in greater danger.

Has the perpetrator threatened to kill the survivor or himself?

Perpetrators who threaten suicide or homicide must be considered very dangerous. If the perpetrator has killed before, in or out of combat, he might be even more dangerous.

Is he obsessive, jealous or isolating? (i.e. says he cannot live without her, is very jealous and accuses her of seeing other men, closely monitors her and stalks her when she tries to do her own activities)

Survivor is likely to be more isolated, have fear of reaching out to anyone for help and be at extreme risk if she does.

Does the perpetrator use drugs or often drink too much?

This is likely to impair his judgement.

Does the perpetrator seem very sad or depressed?

This might mean he feels hopeless and could increase the risk of threats to his own life or the survivor's body.

Step 1:

Identify her existing responses

“What do you do when you are in danger?” - Discuss it with her and see if and how it is working.

Step 2:

Identify her existing resources

“Where could you go?” - Help the survivor to identify at least one safe place she could get to quickly in an emergency. She should be arranging things with the place before time;

“Whom do you trust?” - Think about anyone that the survivor can trust. For example she might create a signal with helpful neighbours so that when they see the signal they would plan a group visit;

“What financial resources do you have?” - Can she save money and hide it somewhere the perpetrator will never find it;

“What material resources do you have?”

Step 3:

Exploring safety strategies

-“Who knows already about the abuse from your partner?”

-“Is there anyone who can talk to the perpetrator at a non-violent time and try to discourage the violence?”

-“What local authorities or police might you involve and under what circumstances would you involve them?”

-“How can you involve your children?”

Step 4:

Discuss what happens if she needs or decides to leave

-“What would you bring with you if you had to leave?” - consider important documents for her and the children, clothing, food, money and how they would be carried;

-“If you leave what will happen to your children?” - what would be the role of the children in the escape? How can the safety of the children be ensured by the survivor and are they able to handle the escape?;

-“Who else might be in danger if you leave?” - consider whether the perpetrator would take out his frustration on anyone else.

SAFETY PLANNING (for participants of 14-18 years old)

Objectives:

- To identify potential risks in the personal environment
- To identify personal safety network and safety plan

Activity 1: SITUATIONS THAT AFFECT YOUR SAFETY (30 minutes)

SAY: Many girls your age can face difficult situations that can affect their safety. Today, we will think about the ways girls can respond to these situations to help better protect themselves.

DO: Split the girls into groups of four; ask them to draw a map of their surrounding environment. i.e. home, school, centre, etc.

SAY: Imagine you are in a plane, seeing your environment from above. The places you visit, the roads you take and the transportation you use to go to these places. Starting from your home and including all the places you visit during the day. DO:

- Ask them to identify the different types of risks girls may face in their environment that could affect her safety. Ask them to mark on the map the places where they might face these risks (you can ask them to all put a RED X on them, or another symbol you agree on)

- Bring the girls back to the wider group when they
- Feeling safe is important to everyone, but especially for women and girls.
- Sometimes our gender makes us vulnerable to others who may want to hurt us or take advantage of us for their own benefit.
- However, women and girls are strong.
- They know how to help each other and they want to keep themselves and those they care about, safe.

Information sessions and referrals

- During this session we are going to develop our safety plans and build upon them and a safety network of friends and others who can help us when we need it.
- In the previous sessions, we have learned about types of violence/ abuse.
- We are going to develop plans around the main risks you brought up in your safety maps.

DO:

- In their groups, ask them to choose one dangerous situation identified in the safety maps and ask them to think about how they can protect themselves against this type of situation.
- Ask each group to develop a list of do's and don'ts for each situation. Ask them to present back to the group and make sure that you clarify any misconceptions, dangerous strategies (Keep a knife, confrontation, kill him, kill myself, don't speak up, respond to his desires, change the way I dress).
- Also reinforce the good strategies (tell someone I trust, tell caseworker, call hotline number, scream, don't be alone on public transport, ask a friend/relative to come with me) that they suggest.

DO's

- Always let a trusted friend or family member know where you're going and what time you should be home.
- Walk in well-lit areas with lots of people. Avoid dark, isolated areas, this involves going to the toilet at night.
- Memorize or keep the number of the local police station/safe space hotline or a trusted person to call in an emergency.
- Be alert and aware of your surroundings.
- Do go to the nearest police station or crowded area if you are being harassed or followed.
- Do not accept gifts from people who might try to ask you for favors.

- Let someone you trust/caseworker know if anyone in your community makes you feel uncomfortable.
- If you have to visit someone who makes you feel uncomfortable, ask your sister/ other trusted person to come with you.
- Agree with your friends/sisters/etc to make a specific sound when you need help
- Move in to a room where you can escape or others can hear you.
- Remove or hide harmful tools that could be used.

•DON'Ts

- Walk by yourself at night.
- Tell strangers personal details about yourself (e.g. where you live or work, your phone number).
- Don't let strangers or people you don't know well enter the house, especially when you are alone.
- Don't carry too much money or valuables with you.
- Don't accept rides from strangers. And only travel in a taxi with red number plates.
- Don't take shortcuts through isolated areas.
- Don't send private photos of yourself on applications such as WhatsApp because these can be shared widely.
- Don't do things that make you feel uncomfortable, even if your friends try and convince you that it is a good idea

SAY:

- Over the last few months, we've talked about how to be assertive and how to ask for what we want and need.
- We respect our family members, our friends, and most importantly, ourselves.
- Girls and women should be shown respect and treated as equals with decency and kindness.
- If you know men and boys who treat women and girls poorly, do not be friends with them, stay away from them.

Activity 2: MY SAFETY NETWORK and MY SAFETY PLAN (30 minutes)

SAY:

- We have developed a do's and don'ts list in our groups to help protect us from the main situations girls in our community face.
- Now we are going to work individually on our safety network and plan, identifying those people and places we can turn to if we experience violence.

DO: Give each girl the social network diagram.

SAY: Each circle in your social network diagram will represent a person or place in your safety network - the people or places that you can go to for the issues and problems we talked about in the activity above and a description of what this person can do to keep you safe, for example the safe space can offer you case management, referral to other service providers and emotional support. Here you can also include contact information such as telephone numbers/location. This is her private support network and that she can add to it any time she wants.

SAY:

- If you want to work more on your individual safety plan, or you would like to develop a specific plan for something that is happening to you or you are scared might happen to you, please talk to a caseworker at the end of the session. Caseworkers are specialized in developing safety plans and will keep your plans confidential.

- Now we have discussed what to do to stay safe. Even though a girl takes these precautions, she still might experience violence and abuse. Share with the girls the tips below. I'm going to list a few things that a girl can do if this ever happens to her: A girl can talk to a parent, trusted adult or friend A girl can tell a caseworker or someone else you trust at the safe space. Staff there should be trained on how to deal with violence affecting women and girls can help you access help when you need and ask for it. A girl who has experienced physical or sexual violence should tell someone she trusts to help her seek medical attention if it is required (3 days/72 hours) because this can help prevent health related consequences. A girl should never blame herself for any violence/abuse that she experiences.

1.4. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

The guide, found below, for dealing with gender-based violence was translated from Spanish and adapted to Greek factual data with the use of supplementary information and materials, who's source is clearly highlighted. The original title is *Guía de autocuidado y autodefensa para mujeres víctimas de trata con fines de explotación sexual* and was written by the organization **Accem**. Access to the original text is available through the following link http://www.accem.es/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/guia_Autocuidado-Autodefensa-Exp-Sexual.pdf

- ***What is human trafficking?***

The trafficking of human beings with the intention of economic exploitation is a blatant violation of human rights, it is a modern form of slavery and one of the most savage and cruel manners of gender-based violence. According to the International Labor Organization, every year approximately 2,500,000 individuals are affected by sex trafficking, especially women and girls, in all corners of the earth. It is an operation that exceeds national borders and yields around 7 billion dollars in profit per year, meanwhile it is the third most profitable illegal activity behind drug and arms trade.

Sex trafficking involves the violation of many human rights, as detailed below:

- Right to not be subjected by force to slavery or labor
- Right to not be subjected to torture practices or other forms of dehumanizing degrading treatment
- Right to health
- Right to decent shelter in safe conditions
- Right to not endure discrimination based on gender
- Right to fair labor with favorable conditions
- Right to life

According to the definition given by the Palermo Protocol, human trafficking is “recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring 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 labor or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs”

Trafficking with the intention of sexual exploitation is an especially complex problem whose perception and confrontation require the approach of various sectors with an open mind, broad vision and without prejudices.

Besides the fact that it is one of the oldest crimes, until quite recently, society has turned a blind eye. Incorrect ideas, fears and ignorance all had us playing the role of the victim of the crime, rather than the criminal or customer.

The history of sex trafficking in the sense of sexual violence was one that was suppressed and rarely mentioned. The prevailing mentality was that women are property, objects, tools used only for male satisfaction. In the case of sex trafficking, people are transformed into a consumable product which allows the “buyer”, or the person who pays, to do whatever he pleases to the other’s body.

It is not very widely acceptable to speak about trafficking with the purpose of sexual exploitation in our society. It seems inconceivable that in a prosperous society there are existing phenomena of slavery, and therefore there is often a denial of this reality. Victims have difficulty shedding light on the terrible things that have happened to them because, in addition to the harm they were subjected to by those who merchandized them, there is the fear that they will be judged, criticized and once again become victims, but this time, of social factors, institutions, their families and even society as a whole.

Despite all the above, with the passage of time there are more and more aid agencies, institutional support, sensitivity, awareness, etc. Consistently, more and more victims decide to break their silence and report their situation to authorities in order to overcome their fears and to demand the legitimization of their pain, the treatment and care for the damage they have endured and been subjected to; this way they contribute to the fight against crime.

Sources:

My Safety My Wellbeing- Save the Children's Resource Centre, pages 138-146.

Interagency Gender Based Violence Case Management Guidelines- from page 99 to 102

Interagency Gender Based Violence Case Management Guidelines-p. 8

REMEMBER:**WE CAN ALL WORK TOGETHER AND FIGHT AGAINST SEX TRAFFICKING****WHOEVER MAY BE A VICTIM****ALL OF US AS CITIZENS CAN SAY:****ENOUGH HUMAN EXPLOITATION BY FELLOW HUMANS**

- ***Instructions for using this guide***

Before you begin reading this guide, it's good to find a quiet place where you feel safe and open. While reading this guide, you may find that some information is painful to deal with. If you think you need to, ask for the help of a specialist. It's better to face that obstacle with a companion by your side because that way, you make the process more bearable.

If it's not too much of a bother, we recommend that you always keep a notepad with you to write down any impulse which may pass through your brain. Imagine it to be a notebook you are keeping for a journey you're on. A journey into your very being. On this notepad, you can write your thoughts, feelings, doubts, fears, clever ideas and your dreams, memories, images, etc. You may find it useful.

- **What is human trafficking with intent of sexual exploitation.**
- If certain expectations that were promised to you before you came to Greece were never realized after you arrived:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If you don't have the documents that certify your identity (passport, AΦM-tax number, identification card) or if you have them but they aren't valid any longer (they have expired, they were not stamped upon entering Greece, etc.):

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If you feel trapped under a certain debt obliging you to work nonstop (unmanageable work hours, no days off, etc.):

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If in order to leave from the place you are staying, they must accompany you wherever you go (to the doctor, shopping, to the hair salon):

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If they have made you believe that you face danger if you leave the club (problems because you don't have papers, you may be arrested by the police, someone may deceive you):

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If they have made you believe that you cannot trust anyone:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If you don't have the freedom to communicate with your friends and family whenever you want:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If you don't have control of your own money:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If your privacy has been violated because there is always someone near you:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If you are subject to take part in undesired sexual activities:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If someone else is looking to make a quick large profit from these unwanted sexual activities:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If you feel that something bad could possibly happen to you or a member of your family:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If you are victim to attacks, duress, threats, extortion, abuse of power, etc.:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If you live in the same place where you practice prostitution:

YOU MAY BE A VICTIM OF HUMAN TRAFFICKING WITH THE INTENT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

- If you don't recognize yourself anymore (you feel that you cannot trust others, you are afraid):

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Consequently, trafficking or trade with the intent of sexual manipulation is internationally recognized as gender based violence. It is theorized as one of the fastest growing crimes worldwide and according to the International Labor Organization, it involves the blatant violation of human rights.

The concept of trafficking can take three forms

- Sexual exploitation
- Prostitution
- Trafficking with the goal of sexual exploitation

And these three forms have the following common characteristics:

- Gender-based violence
- Structural inequality based on gender
- Violation of human rights

Despite the difficulty of calculating the dimensions of the problem, the International Organization for Migration estimates that in Europe there are 140,000 victims of sex trafficking who would be able to create profits of 2,500 billion euros.

- **What are the flawed ideas?**

In the following section, we would like to mention a series of myths which characterize our society's beliefs. These beliefs contribute to sex trafficking by distorting reality.

- MYTH 1: Slavery is a thing of the past and doesn't exist anymore, and sex trafficking is not so common or widespread.

REALITY: Sex trafficking is currently happening every day all around the world. It is calculated that every year 2.5 billion individuals, more than 7,000 individuals a day, fall victim to trafficking with the intent of sexual and economic exploitation.

- MYTH 2: Sex trafficking is a hidden reality and occurs only in poor countries and big cities.

REALITY: Sex trafficking happens everywhere, all over the world.

- MYTH 3: The victims of sex trafficking can ask for help or to be characterized as victims. If this doesn't take place, it is because they don't want it to or because they are not actually victims.

REALITY: Many victims do not characterize themselves as victims. They don't ask for help because they live in isolation or under the control of the traffickers. Even if they have the opportunity, the lack of trust, fear, insecurity, self-guilt, etc. cause the victims to remain silent.

- MYTH 4: The women who are subjected to prostitution with intention of sexual exploitation are whores and are satisfied with this kind of work, or they do it because they like it.

REALITY: Sexual exploitation in any form, if observed, is a violation of human rights, it is not work. Women who have been trapped in the sex business by traffickers did not choose it and moreover, it is not something they like. In fact, they are victims of a modern form of forced labor. They live under the rule of a threatening regime and are subjected to every kind of abuse.

- MYTH 5 Only men are traffickers

REALITY: The allegation that only men are involved in sex trafficking cases makes the victims more vulnerable. This perception enables many female traffickers to approach their victims without difficulty, winning their trust more easily.

- MYTH 6: The victims of sex trafficking are people who have received only a low level of education, because someone who has intellectual qualifications would not fall victim to trafficking.

REALITY: We are all capable of becoming trafficking victims. The traders exploit an incidental moment of weakness in order to trick, approach, etc. their victims. For example, a “job offer” or an “opportunity” to study abroad. Do not forget, the traffickers use the dreams we may have, as bait.

- MYTH 7: All victims of sex trafficking are poor.

REALITY: There is no specific profile of a sex trafficking victim. Any woman could find herself in an identical victim situation, in the same way any woman can become a victim of gender-based violence.

- MYTH 8: The traffickers are people we have never met before.

REALITY: In certain cases, the traffickers are people we know and trust (relatives, friends, etc.).

- MYTH 9: You are unable to help change the situation that sex trafficking victims are experiencing.

REALITY: We can all contribute and play a role in the fight against this crime that defiles human rights. You can cooperate, you can participate in citizen sensitivity and awareness programs. You can discover evidence of sex trafficking, you can support these people in their effort in escaping from this situation, you can file a report.

➤ ***How can I explain how im feeling?***

You're a woman who survived. While reading this guide, you may feel speechless and overwhelmed by emotions or feelings, memories which are difficult for you to handle and cause your body to fill with distress and embarrassment. If this is the case, do not feel as though you are required to read it. Leave it to the side for as long as you need. On the other hand, reading this guide may comfort and console you and give meaning to many of your experiences. The survival of and life after situations

of violence go through different stages. You may not have observed some of these survival stages before, or even some of the mechanisms.

Everyone reacts differently to similar incidences, even in cases of violence. There is no one specific way to react.

What we are trying to show is a series of symptoms or emotions a victim of sex trafficking crimes could possibly feel. The text below will help you better understand your emotions and feelings to give meaning to the situation you are living in and likely reactions you may have.

YOU HAVE LIVED THROUGH A TRAUMATIC EXPERIENCE...

YOU ARE NOT CRAZY!

Consequently, it's NATURAL that you are possibly enduring some of the feelings or having some of the thoughts that are mentioned below:

EMOTIONAL CONSEQUENCES

- Sense of delirium or absurdity
- Fear and anxiety
- Intense anger
- Guilt and shame
- Sadness

MENTAL CONSEQUENCES

- Self-esteem and self-image
- Undesired memories
- Lapses in memory and concentration

CONSEQUENCES ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH THE WORLD

- Lack of trust
- Desire to be alone and isolated
- Your image of the world has changed
- Your personal relationships have been affected
- Your sexuality has been affected
- Your image of motherhood has been affected

CONSEQUENCES ON YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH YOUR BODY

- Feeling of dirtiness and mania for cleanliness
- Self-destructive behavior
- Body aches and pains
- Feeling of sleepiness or fatigue

➤ ***Emotional and spiritual world****A feeling of reality*

- Sometimes, pain can cause you to lose touch with your surroundings. For some, this is the only way to override their pain. It's likely that you feel empty emotionally and you watch the things that are happening around you as if you were watching a movie
- This is your brain's effort to escape from reality. To distance itself and take a breath to recover.

Fear and anxiety

- Its usual to be feeling afraid (to be alone, to fear the dark, to lose the control, to fear that they may cause you harm again or you may cause harm to others, to go crazy, etc.).
- Fear comes as a defense reaction to a threatening fact. It allows us to protect ourselves and to be prudent.
- You can attempt to escape situations, this is a way of self-protection in which you confront things slowly.

Intense anger

- It's likely you have feelings of intense anger towards those who attack you, or the ones who did not protect you, or towards the world in general.
- It's your right to feel this way.
- Certain people, seeing that you are feeling such intense anger, are terrorized, especially if this anger is accompanied by thoughts of revenge.
- It's important to know, however, that it's one thing to think, and one thing to act on our thoughts. Thinking about taking revenge doesn't mean you will actually do it. This is probably just a way for you to have control of the situation.
- Anger and fury are absolutely understandable if you do not have enough support or if you have never been the victim of wrongdoings.

Guilt and shame

- If you have enjoyed any of your sexual encounters or attacks. Something like this happening is not strange whatsoever because our body responds and reacts without our thoughts intervening in the process. The body responds to physical stimuli and thus, during purchased sexual activity it is likely to feel enjoyment. It is not always easy to control how our body responds.
- If when faced with a similar situation, you did nothing to stop or avoid it. In many cases, fear or threats on our physical integrity cause us to freeze. Sometimes we encounter violence so intense we freeze, and non-responsiveness is sometimes the best and only defense.
- If you didn't perceive the fact that you were being deceived. You judge the situation now using information you didn't have in that moment.

Sadness

- It's natural to feel constantly sad and that you are unsatisfied (even if externally you don't show it and you are able to appear carefree and happy.)

- Sadness for the life you dreamed about which you are unable to live and for the reality you live in without ever having chosen it.
- Sometimes you may feel the need to cry but doing so does not comfort or console you. You also may not be able to cry ever about anything, as if all your emotions have disappeared.
- You may not find satisfaction anymore in doing any of the things that used to fulfill and satisfy you. Or your general interest in things has disappeared.
- **Cognitive world**

Self-esteem and self-image

- Self-esteem is the feeling of respect we have towards ourselves. It does not mean that you think of yourself as better than everyone else, nor that you like everything about yourself. It simply means that you feel that you have value as a human.
- Having self-esteem is important in life. However, when we become victims of an attack, we may feel dirty or ashamed, that we are not worthy of anything, as if we are objects.
- If the lack of self-esteem is long-term, the case may be that you are not taking care of yourself, nor are you expecting anyone else to take care of you. You may have accepted naturally that they do not treat you with respect or you may even tolerate that they harm you without taking your humanity into consideration.
- Our self-image is directly connected to our self-esteem. Violence negatively affects our self-image. For this reason, you may behave in a “strange” manner towards others (more aggressive or reserved) so that they interpret this gesture believing that you are “peculiar” or that “you aren’t well”.
- Whoever is doing us wrong wants to isolate us, to create confusion in us, thereby making us responsible for the situation with their contradicting messages; “this is for your own good”, “I know you like it”. This all damages the image you have of yourself and makes it difficult to ask for help, increasing the sense of loneliness and the feeling that something is wrong with you.

Undesired memories (flashbacks)

- Flashbacks are occasions where we relive traumatic experiences as if these moments or situations that hurt us are happening again before our eyes. Usually, they are anxiety states which cause a strong feeling of a lack of control or of anxiety. Sometimes, they may cause panic attacks (rapid heart beat, sweating, a feeling of being suffocated, etc.)

- Undesired memories (flashbacks) are an effort to make sense of a painful experience, to give meaning to something that we have lived through, to search for the ending of the movie or an explanation of relevance.

Your memory and concentration are empty

- You probably have observed that you have trouble maintaining your focus during a conversation or when you are doing something. You may have noticed that your memory doesn't function how it used to and that the pain you feel occupies such a large portion of your mind that you cannot think about anything else.
- This problem is usually a passing one. As you regain control in your life, slowly but surely it ceases to occur.

- **Your relationship with other people and the world around you**

Lack of trust

- One of the consequences of violence is the loss of trust for yourself and also for others, because you have learned to not trust your thoughts, your emotions, your senses nor your perceptions. Your captors have made you believe that these notions are false or that you have made a mistake.
- Lacking trust towards others is a consequence of being deceived. In this moment, if you still feel vulnerable, this lack of trust is protecting you.

Desire to live alone and to isolate yourself

- You may, in an effort to maintain control, feel the need to live alone and to not have any kind of relationship with anyone else.

Your image of the world has changed

- We all feel the need to think that, "the world is a sure place and if it isn't, at least I am sure." However, when we are victims of sex trafficking or violence, it is quite difficult to maintain these ideas concerning safety.
- Another idea we usually have is that all facts have logical causes, but the violence that surrounds us doesn't have that logic, so the world transforms into a place where nothing is predictable. Besides that, we have the need to be able, in some way, to predict our futures to give meaning to our lives and to understand our behavior. It gives us certainty and trust in ourselves and in others.

Personal Relationships

- Relationships are necessary for everyone. In order to live, we need other people and we have a need to know that someone else needs us.
- Although, if you have managed to survive, it is quite probable that you feel isolated or different from everyone else.
- If someone you trusted attacked or betrayed you, it makes sense not to trust anyone else. Perhaps the relationships in your surroundings do not provide security.

Sexuality

- When everything revolves around satisfying the desires of a man and you end up satisfying these desires even before they ask you to do so, then your own desires, what you really want, disappear.
- When the only thing a man asks from you is your body, then you cease to give your erotic body, you cease to feel sexual desire. Something as small as a gesture, a word or a caress of your body reminds you of senses that make you feel uncomfortable or moments that you don't want to remember.

Motherhood

- Being a mum is not something easy. There is always the fear that you are making a mistake, that you aren't able to protect or educate your child/ren appropriately. This fear becomes even more intense if you have managed to survive. When we have endured harm and damages, we don't always know how to protect our children, especially if we don't have close examples to help us and show us the way. If our own childhood was painful for us, that pain may enter in to the relationship we have with our children.
- Also, many mothers who have managed to survive after violent situations, for that reason exactly, many times become over-protective.

Your relationship with your body

The feeling of dirtiness and mania for cleanliness

- One of the consequences of violence is the loss of trust for yourself but also for others, because you have learned to not trust your thoughts, your emotions, your senses nor your perceptions. Your captors have made you believe that these notions are false or that you have made a mistake.
- Lacking trust towards others is a consequence of being deceived. In this moment, if you still feel vulnerable, this lack of trust is protecting you.

Self-destructive behaviors

- These behaviors range from self-criticisms all the way until suicide attempts, passing through the abuse of drugs or other addictive substances, as well as other problems. This might seem strange, but some people, suffering under continued torment and torture, only feel alive when they live through dangerous situations. It may be a form of self-punishment, a way for them to ask for help or to reduce the emotional pain by trying to not feel any emotion at all.

Physical pain

- When our emotional torment is large, and we are unable to express it with words, it may be stated by our bodies. Perhaps this may explain an ailment you have which you feel that you can't explain with words. Think that emotional pain can cause us to become ill, since when we endure stressful situations our bodily defenses are reduced.

Sleepiness and fatigue

- You may be having difficulties with sleep or you're waking up abruptly. A moment of rest becomes a moment of terror, and this increases the feeling of loss of control.

Below, you can read the experiences of other women who have endured situations of sexual exploitation. Perhaps their testimonies may help you, with frightening ease, to understand certain things that may be happening to you, like nightmares and dreams which sometimes you remember and other times you don't.

➤ **Emotional and spiritual world**

Feeling of "non-reality"

"My mind loses control and I don't feel that I am present here."

Fear

"Every time that they touched my hair, I started to shake, quiver and wet myself."

Vigilance and anxiety

"My heart started to beat incredibly fast and I feel that in that moment I was dying."

Intense anger

"I would like for the entire world to go through what I went through to learn what torture really is."

"They put me on an airplane to throw me out of Spain and I told them that I was the victim not a criminal. Later, I slapped the police officer."

Guilt and Shame

"I should have understood that they were deceiving me."

"If my mom saw me, she would be very ashamed of me."

"Whatever I live through I deserve because I have done horrible things."

Sadness

"I continuously feel a weight in my heart and something that is suffocating me by the throat."

"When I close my eyes, all I see is black. I don't smell, I don't feel... I am like I don't exist."

➤ **Cognitive world**

Self-esteem and self-image

"I don't like myself at all, I don't like how I think, I don't want to be looked at ... I don't like me."

Undesired memories and flashbacks

"Every night I dreamt that my savior abandoned me at the altar."

"They grabbed me by the hair and hit strongly and when I touched my face it was filled with cuts and scars. I still smell the blood."

Memory and concentration

“Sometimes when I am speaking about a subject, I lose my train of thought and I am unable to continue. I don’t remember what I was talking about.”

➤ ***Relationship with your body***

Feeling of dirtiness and mania for cleanliness

“I wash myself constantly but am disgusted with myself, I don’t feel clean.”

“Every Monday I clean my room for hours on end because I don’t feel relaxed in it.”

Self-destructive behaviors

“Every night I sniff cocaine and drink until I lose all my senses.”

“When I look at myself in the mirror I scratch my face because I don’t deserve to live.”

Physical pain

“I can’t eat I don’t have an appetite. My stomach really hurts.”

“Almost every day I have a headache. I may have a tumor in my head.”

Sleep and rest

“I haven’t slept for two days because when I go to close my eyes I remember all that I lived through.”

➤ **Your relationship with others and your surroundings**

Lack of trust

“I don’t want to tell you anything, I don’t know you. How do I know that you’ll help me?”

Desire for loneliness and isolation

“This is the only place where I feel safe. Only inside of these four walls.”

Your image of the world has changed

“There is no place where I feel safe.”

“I feel awful in any situation I am in because I’m afraid that they will harm me.”

Personal Relationships

“I don’t have anyone here. I don’t know what a hug is, because I don’t feel it. I don’t know who is hugging me. I don’t want to hug anyone either. Why?”

Sexuality

“He wants to do it all the time and I can’t stop the tears. I search for places to cry. I don’t want to, and I cannot, anymore.”

Motherhood

“They are suffering because their sister is in Spain and they tell me that they hate me. That I’m a bad person. They don’t know what I have been through to send money back to Brazil, so they can come to Spain. I don’t know what I have to do to prove to them that I love them.”

➤ **What is and how is the decision-making process?**

Decision-making is the process of choosing one of the offered solutions to a problem. It means I take a specific road.

We have all made decisions at times in our lives and we know how difficult it is to do sometimes.

There is no such thing as an ideal moment to make a decision. Certain times we are obligated to do so. It is important to know that there is no one ideal decision, but rather it depends on every circumstance, on the specific moment and the person. Aside from the immediate result, the making of a decision helps us progress in life.

You may know what the next step is or sometimes you may feel confused. Sometimes, you are determined to get out of the situation that you have fallen into and other times you think that it may be better to stay where you are, and you know what awaits you. To solve this problem, it is good to know in which moment exactly that you find yourself. Where are you now?

You don't know if you were the victim of this crime or not, you want to clarify.

You have noticed that you were the victim of fraud and you want more information so you know what to do, but without committing to anything.

You practice prostitution, but this isn't something that you want. Or you are searching for alternatives.

You know that you were the victim of sex trafficking or you want to report your situation to the authorities or you want to see what rights you have.

You may have reasons to leave or reasons to stay where you are. It is a difficult time, especially if you are alone and you don't share your emotions with anyone else.

What is happening is perfectly normal. It is called **AMBIVALENCE** and it presents itself to us when we are in the decision-making process. If you feel this way, then you are making decisions. When you decide, it means that you are progressing and that you do not give up in the face of a situation that makes you feel miserable.

If you think that this is the case you're in, we beg of you to continue reading because what follows below may help you in this process. Perhaps this guide will help you make a decision. Remember,

every decision you make is correct. It is YOUR decision. The choices may vary from asking for help so you can get out of the situation you are in, to waiting for the appropriate moment to advance. You may still prefer to stay in the situation you find yourself in now.

How do I know that I have the suitable information to make a decision?

- If you recognize your thoughts and emotions and you know their cause.
- If you define yourself as a victim/survivor of trafficking with the intention of sexual exploitation.
- If you know a certain recourse or person whom you can address for help.

We would like to show you a simple exercise that perhaps can help you decide, when it is time for you to make a decision. It has to do with listening to your heart, the frequency of the beats. Surely you will have heard that solutions are always found in the heart, so let's validate that statement. The first time you try this, you will need to cut yourself off from the outside world and to expel all senses and meanings from your body for a few minutes. The best way to begin is with two long, slow, deep breaths. After 10 or 15 minutes, you can start paying attention to your heart. It may help you to lightly place your hand on your chest and concentrate your thought solely on this. Think as if you are breathing from inside of your heart. Continue to breathe deeply and slowly.

The next step is to connect with the warmth that is developing in your chest. In the beginning you only feel it slightly. An effective method to increase this warm feeling is to remember a pleasant feeling that will flood your chest. The heart is especially sensitive to pleasant emotions. During this exercise, a light smile may be etched into your face almost as if it was born in your heart and sprawled out on your face. The more you practice this technique the easier you will be able to listen to your heart.

Which choices are available to me?

Think for a few minutes what your available solutions are here and now. Before you continue reading, we recommend that you write them down. Stop and observe your body. What is happening now? Possibly, you feel now that staying calm is exactly what you need. If you feel some annoyance or pain that worries you, it may be necessary that you go to the closest Health Centre. Taking care of your health may open doors for you into a certain procedure or to go down a certain road where you define the rhythm.

Searching for specialized information might help you on this road.

If you open that door, you may be informed of a certain safe place where they will give you specialized care or treatment.

This may be the beginning of something. Think, what and how. Perhaps it would be helpful for you to write this all down. Searching for help from Security Bodies (the Police) might be a solution. You have rights and can ask for help. It does not matter if you have papers or not. If you find yourself in a place where you don't want to be or in conditions which you don't want, then you are a victim of wrongdoing or crime. They will be able to inform you accordingly. If, finally, you decide that you want to report your situation to the authorities, you should know that you are entitled to a 30-day period, at least, to think it over and decide if this is something you really want to do. During this time, you can get help from specialists and stay in a "safe house" and calm environment. This will allow you to decide with composure what you really want to do.

This procedure is hard and intense, especially in the first moments that you find yourself far away from your family, with people who you still do not know very well, whom you do not trust, in a reception house, trying to understand all that has happened to you. You haven't fulfilled the expectations you had when you left from your country and most likely you cannot say anything to anyone, not even your family, because you don't want to worry them, or you don't trust them. It's difficult and you know that best, but you should know that with the passage of time, most people overcome their difficulties and evaluate this process quite positively.

During this reflection period, they will inform you about your rights, you will have access to medical services and advice, you will be able to speak and express yourself in a trustworthy and respectful environment. You will try to understand exactly what happened to you, to put your thoughts in order, to rediscover your usual sleeping and eating hours, to start to see life again with hope and new

provisions. You will be able to meet people who also lived through sex trafficking situations, you will have access to information and final analysis, you will be able to return to a regular daily life and to redefine calmly what exactly it is that you want. If this reflection period passes and you decide that you don't want to proceed with the accusation, you will continue to receive the necessary support from the program. The same will happen if you decide to file the report. Now you will no longer be alone. You will have people helping you selflessly. You may need to search for new roads which until today have been unknown to you. In order to discover them, allow yourself to be expressed freely, to be quiet, but most importantly to realize that:

YOU ARE A HUMAN, YOU ARE FREE AND YOU HAVE RIGHTS

- **Which is the road to recovery?**

To grow from your experiences.

If you have made it this far, surely it was not easy. It was necessary that you make complicated decisions. We know that it is not the same to confront a situation, using appropriate tools from being alone and helpless. Think that the most difficult thing that you have lived through was the deception of which you were a victim. Despite all that, you managed to survive. Now, what you have to do is put yourself once again in focus, recover, get stronger and to rediscover yourself.

There are various important tools that you must find in a moment like the one you find yourself in now. One of the most important is INFORMATION.

You know by now that good and bad decisions do not exist. There are good and bad conditions under which decisions are made. For this reason:

- Ask for information (legal advice, psychological support, residence, economic support, accompaniment to health centres, etc.)
- Take a little time.
- Take care of yourself, rest.
- Search for a place where you will be able to speak freely, where they will listen to you, you will feel that they accept and respect you.