

# GUIDANCE

## Addressing Emerging Human Trafficking Trends and Consequences of the COVID-19 Pandemic



This guidance is part of ODIHR's ongoing efforts to respond to human rights challenges caused by the COVID-19 pandemic throughout the OSCE. It is a joint publication with UN Women and seeks to provide strategic guidance to address the consequences of the pandemic on trafficking in human beings.



# CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>4</b>
<b>I. INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>5</b>
<b>II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE SURVEY</b> .....	<b>10</b>
A. SURVIVORS' SURVEY .....	10
B. FRONTLINE ORGANIZATIONS SURVEY .....	10
<b>III. SUMMARY OF THE SURVEYS' FINDINGS</b> .....	<b>11</b>
A. SURVIVOR SURVEY .....	11
B. FRONTLINE ORGANIZATIONS SURVEY .....	22
<b>IV. EMERGING COVID-19 THB CHALLENGES AND TRENDS</b> .....	<b>27</b>
A. DISCRIMINATION AND THB .....	27
B. GENDER AND THE SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS .....	28
C. CHILDREN AND THEIR SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES .....	30
D. GROWTH OF THB CRIME IN CYBERSPACE .....	30
E. CROSS-LINKAGES BETWEEN MIGRATION AND THB .....	31
F. OTHER EMERGING ISSUES .....	34
<b>V. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE THB TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:</b> .....	<b>35</b>
<b>ACRONYMS</b> .....	<b>43</b>
<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b> .....	<b>45</b>
<b>ANNEX I</b> .....	<b>51</b>
<b>ANNEX II</b> .....	<b>87</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) and The United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN Women), advised by a group of experts and based on the survey findings presented here, have developed policy recommendations to governments to ensure the implementation of the human rights, gender sensitive, trauma informed and victim-centered approach to combatting trafficking in human beings as outlined in ODIHR's *National Referral Mechanism Handbook* through the COVID-19 pandemic. The panel of experts is composed of:

- Kevin Hyland, Former first United Kingdom Anti-Slavery Commissioner and Member of Council of Europe GRETA;
- Dalia Leinarte, Chair of CEDAW Committee for General Recommendations Trafficking of Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration;
- Congressman Christopher H. Smith, OSCE PA Special Representative on Human Trafficking Issues;
- Ambassador Per-Anders Sunesson, Swedish Ambassador at Large for Combating Trafficking in Persons; and
- Shandra Woworuntu, Founder & Vice President of Mentari and survivor leader.

ODIHR and UN Women would like to extend special thanks to Dr. Maia Rusakova, Associate Professor at Saint-Petersburg State University, Director of Regional Public Organization "Stellit" and expert in the sphere of combating sexual exploitation and trafficking in human beings for drafting and analyzing this summary.

This report was prepared under the supervision of Tatiana Kotlyarenko, ODIHR Adviser on Anti-Trafficking Issues, and Alethia Jimenez, UN Women Policy Specialist, Ending Violence Against Women Section. Significant contributions were also made by ODIHR and UN Women staff: Maximilian Scheid, Alvaro Gomez del Valle Ruiz and Michelle Mendes Meireles Silva.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

*“Human trafficking is always invisible. During a pandemic, it is easier to have cases going on that nobody reports.”*  
Frontline Stakeholder from Portugal

The COVID-19 pandemic created new risks and challenges to victims of trafficking (VoTs) and survivors of trafficking, as well as having exacerbated the vulnerabilities of at-risk groups to trafficking. To analyze emerging trafficking in human beings (THB) trends and dynamics and to develop a response based on empirical data to address the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, ODIHR and UN Women conducted a global survey of (1) survivors of trafficking and (2) frontline stakeholders. Based on the survey findings and empirical data collected, a set of policy recommendations were developed.

The survey findings indicate that through the COVID-19 pandemic and afterwards, exacerbation of vulnerability of women and girls to THB for the purposes of sexual exploitation will increase. Online recruitment, grooming and exploitation have been widely used by traffickers during the pandemic. There are also indications that trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation online, including the demand for Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM) has increased.<sup>1</sup> The majority of anti-trafficking stakeholders and survivors of trafficking reported decreased accessibility of assistance and services for VoTs and survivors of trafficking.

Frontline organizations experienced significant challenges in their activities during the pandemic due to additional barriers in co-ordination and co-operation with

governmental institutions and law enforcement agencies; lack of financial resources; difficulties in reaching vulnerable groups; and suspension or postponement of planned prevention and awareness raising activities. The combination of these factors on the work of frontline anti-trafficking stakeholders negatively impacts prevention, prosecution, and protection efforts to combat trafficking in human beings (CTHB).

Based on the survey findings and research, ODIHR and UN Women have developed policy recommendations to address the trends and consequences of the pandemic on CTHB covering the following areas: 1) strengthen the implementation of international legal frameworks; 2) develop effective implementation of National Referral Mechanism (NRMs) or equivalent systems to address the current THB trends and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic; 3) develop and/or update of National Strategies and National Action Plans (NAPs) to CTHB to address the THB trends and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic; 4) strengthen identification of VoTs to address the trends and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic; 5) make services to VoTs and survivors of trafficking more accessible during and post pandemic; 6) provide access to remedies including justice and information; 7) address specific needs of women and girls; 8) address specific needs of children; 9) support and build capacity for both governmental and non-governmental frontline stakeholders; 10) strengthen efforts at THB prevention related to the pandemic; and 11) implement measures to reduce THB after the pandemic.

---

<sup>1</sup> While not all forms of CSAM fall within the Palermo Protocol definition, this report only focuses on those that are within the Palermo Protocol definition or interlinked with trafficking for purposes of sexual exploitation.

# I. INTRODUCTION

*“There is a person being exploited. Someone who did not want to be used, bought or sold. Someone who just needed food, rent, someone who just didn’t have anyone else to turn to or another choice. Until we see that person as our friend, neighbor, sister, daughter, etc., it will never stop.”* Female survivor from the United States.<sup>2</sup>

The results of the ODIHR and UN Women global surveys of survivors of trafficking and frontline organizations and stakeholders of THB trends and dynamics through the COVID-19 pandemic have informed the findings and conclusions of the report and its recommendations.

Countries have made significant strides towards addressing the issue of THB through the “4Ps” framework of prevention, prosecution, protection and partnerships, the development of strong national anti-trafficking legislation, policy and National Referral Mechanisms (NRMs), and regional co-operation efforts to combat THB. In addition, countries have recognized the importance of international instruments, in particular the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (the Palermo Protocol) (2000) which includes the first internationally agreed

definition of the crime of trafficking in persons and provides a framework to effectively prevent and combat THB. Other international and regional instruments,<sup>3</sup> as well as the global commitment for the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development through the Sustainable Development Goals 5, 8 and 16, have inspired and impacted the work of many governments globally.

Unfortunately, despite these efforts, this crime persists. Emergency situations, including pandemics, create heightened vulnerability to THB and impact the ability of countries to effectively respond to this crime and protect victims and survivors.

It is estimated that more than 40 million people around the world were victims of forced labour, debt bondage, forced marriage, slavery and slavery-like practices, and trafficking in 2016.<sup>4</sup> Between 2017 and 2018, a total of 74,514 victims of trafficking were detected in over 110 countries.<sup>5</sup> The US department of States reports 105,787<sup>6</sup> VoTs were identified worldwide in 2019. THB disproportionately affects women and girls; 72 per cent of all victims detected worldwide are female. Moreover, sexual exploitation is the predominant form of trafficking,

- 
- 2 All quotes from survivors and frontline organizations are from the responses to the ODIHR and UN Women surveys. The reports of the surveys can be found in the annex of this report.
  - 3 Key international instruments include: The UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989) and its optional protocols, the Worst Forms of Child Labour Convention No. 182 (1999), the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018), and the CEDAW Draft general recommendation on trafficking of women and girls in the context of global migration (2020). Key regional instruments include: American Convention on Human Rights (1969), European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), Brussels Declaration on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2002), Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005), Treaty on European Union, Title VI, Provisions on police and judicial co-operation in criminal matters (2006), the Directive 2011/36/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on preventing and combating trafficking in human beings and protecting its victims, The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999), Economic Community of West African States Declaration on the Fight against Trafficking in Persons (2001), Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples’ Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), Arab Charter on Human Rights (2004), Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Child Trafficking in West Africa (2005), Multilateral Cooperation Agreement to Combat Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children in West and Central Africa (2006), Bangkok Declaration on Irregular/Undocumented Migration (1999), SAARC Convention on Regional Arrangements on the Promotion of Child Welfare in South Asia (2002), Association of Southeast Asian Nations Declaration against Trafficking in Persons particularly Women and Children (2004), Memorandum of Understanding on Cooperation against Trafficking in Persons in the Greater Mekong Subregion (2004), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2007), and, Nasonini Declaration on Regional Security (2002).
  - 4 International Labor Organization (ILO) & Walk Free Foundation (2017), [Global Estimates of Modern Slavery: Forced Labour and Forced Marriage](#)., and Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2020.
  - 5 Forthcoming: United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC).
  - 6 US Department of State (2020), [Trafficking in Persons Report 20th Edition](#), p. 43.

with women and girls representing 94 per cent of total detected victims.<sup>7</sup> Women and children in situations of armed conflict and individuals forcibly displaced by armed conflict can be especially vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. The nexus between THB, sexual violence and terrorism and other organized criminal activities has also been recognized.<sup>8</sup> At the same time, rates of prosecutions and convictions are extremely low,<sup>9</sup> indicating that traffickers are able to avoid justice and detection by evolving and adapting. Lack of effective response efforts further compounds the issue. THB is considered a low risk, high profit crime. For instance, trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation constitutes approximately three-fifths of all detected trafficking cases<sup>10</sup> but generates two-thirds of the global profits from trafficking.<sup>11</sup>

The impacts, consequences and harms of THB are detrimental to survivors and the severity of its impacts are aggravated by gender, age and other specific characteristics of victims. The effective recovery processes of survivors depend on their ability to receive the long-term support that fits their specific needs.

Emerging THB trends and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are marked by gender-specific vulnerabilities and are further exacerbated by already existing gender inequalities. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, women and girls, especially those from marginalized communities, constituted the majority of detected victims of THB and it is likely that this trend will continue

during and in the aftermath.<sup>12</sup> Trafficking in women and girls does not happen in isolation. It happens in a continuum of violence. Poverty and the inability to gain access to decent work may push women to seek risky economic opportunities where they are at risk of coercion, abuse and trafficking. Efforts to flee situations of violence and abuse also prompt women and girls to take risks that may lead to them being trafficked.<sup>13</sup> The links between domestic violence and THB have also been documented.<sup>14</sup> The exponential increase in reports of domestic violence during the COVID-19 can continue to be a push factor. The pandemic has particularly affected the vulnerability of children to THB,<sup>15</sup> especially online. Law enforcement agencies in Europe have reported increased online grooming and exploitation of children through the Internet, as well as an exponential growth of child sexual exploitation material shared online.<sup>16</sup>

THB for the purposes of sexual exploitation is highly gendered. Women and girls constitute 94 per cent of all detected victims of THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation.<sup>17</sup> The Palermo Protocol in defining THB states that “[e]xploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation,” while the Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) calls on states parties to “take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.”<sup>18</sup> According to CEDAW Art. 6, states parties have the legal obligation to suppress all forms of trafficking

---

7 UNODC (2019), [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018](#).

8 UNSC Counter-Terrorism Committee Executive Directorate (n.d.), [Identifying and Exploring the Nexus between Human Trafficking, Terrorism, and Terrorism Financing](#).

9 *Ibid.*

10 UNODC (2019), [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018](#).

11 ILO, [‘ILO says forced labour generates annual profits of US\\$ 150 billion’](#), 20 May 2014.

12 Wagner L. & Hoang T. (2020), [Aggravating circumstances: How coronavirus impacts human trafficking](#), p. 4.

13 UN General Assembly (2018), [Trafficking in women and girls: Report of the Secretary-General](#), 27 July 2018, A/73/263, para. 19.

14 NNEDV (2017), [The Intersections of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking](#).

15 United Nations Sustainable Development Group (2020), [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on children](#).

16 Europol (2020), [Exploiting Isolation: Offenders and victims of online child sexual abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), 19 June 2020.

17 UNODC (2019), [Global Report on Trafficking in Persons 2018](#).

18 Moreover, these links have also been affirmed in regional policies, such as the [Council of Europe’s Parliamentary Assembly Resolution 1983 on Prostitution, trafficking and modern slavery in Europe \(2014\)](#) that ‘trafficking in human beings and prostitution are closely linked’ and the [European Parliament resolution of 26 February 2014 on sexual exploitation and prostitution and its impact on gender equality](#) notes that ‘there are several links between prostitution and trafficking, and recognizes that prostitution – both globally and across Europe – feeds the trafficking of vulnerable women and under-age females’.

in women and girls, and in response, anti-trafficking legal frameworks and policies should exist at the national, regional and international levels. In the CEDAW Committee's view, the crime of trafficking operates due to three principle factors. First, states have not effectively addressed the root causes of women and girls being trafficked. It is precisely the situation of social, economic and political disempowerment and systemic discrimination of women that is exploited by criminals. Second, states have not yet appreciated the link between human trafficking and women's experience of migration. For women migrants, their situation of vulnerability is compounded by the *de jure* and *de facto* discrimination faced when moving within and across borders. Women forcibly displaced by conflicts, humanitarian and climate change-related disasters, are placed in aggravated situations of disadvantage, rendering these groups of women with little defense against criminals. Third, perpetrators of the crime of trafficking in women and girls continue to enjoy impunity due to the lack of attention given to combatting existing and emerging forms of exploitation for which women and girls are trafficked. The CEDAW Committee calls for states to address the demand side for trafficking, thereby rooting out exploitative practices faced by women and girls.<sup>19</sup>

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to the exacerbation of vulnerabilities to THB,<sup>20</sup> further exhibiting that violence against women and girls, including trafficking, sits within a continuum of manifestations of violence based on gendered norms, assumptions and stereotypes around male domination, sexual entitlement, coercion and control.<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, demand

must be understood expansively in order to effectively address trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as any act that fosters any form of exploitation can lead to trafficking.<sup>22</sup>

*"As we have continued our work during the COVID-19 pandemic, traffickers have continued as well. Traffickers did not shut down. They continue to harm people, finding ways to innovate and even capitalize on the chaos. The ratio between risk and reward is expanding in their favor. And so, we press on all the more. As the vulnerable become more vulnerable, we remain resolved in our pursuit of freedom for every victim of human trafficking and accountability for every trafficker."* John Cotton Richmond serves as the United States Ambassador-at-Large to Monitor and Combat Trafficking in Persons<sup>23</sup>

The Ebola pandemic demonstrated that multiple forms of violence are exacerbated within crisis contexts, including THB, child marriage, and sexual exploitation and abuse.<sup>24</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic follows the same trends by increasing vulnerability of at-risk groups to THB and impacting the ability of countries to address the crime of THB.<sup>25</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic poses significant concerns for the effective response to THB, from identification of VoTs, survivor's access to assistance and services, protections, redress, reintegration/social inclusion and overall prevention efforts. Although many governments have prioritized resources for COVID-19 related measures, it is essential that NRMs and equivalent systems continue to function effectively. In line with governments' commitment to a victim-centered, human rights-based, trauma-informed and gender and

---

19 Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (2020), [DRAFT General recommendation on Trafficking in Women and Girls in the Context of Global Migration](#).

20 OHCHR (2020), [COVID-19 Position paper: The impact and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on trafficked and exploited persons](#).

21 UN General Assembly (2018), [Trafficking in women and girls: Report of the Secretary-General](#), 27 July 2018, A/73/263, para. 19.

22 UN Human Rights Council (2009), [Promotion and Protection of All Human Rights, Civil, Political, Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, including the Right to Development: Report submitted by the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children](#), Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, 20 February 2009, A/HRC/10/16, paras. 51-51.

23 US Department of State (2020), [Trafficking in Persons Report 20th Edition](#).

24 UN General Assembly (2016), [Protecting Humanity from Future Health Crises: Report of the High Level Panel on the Global Response to Health Crises](#), 9 February 2016, A/70/723.; See also UNICEF Helpdesk (2018), *GBV in Emergencies: Emergency Responses to Public Health Outbreaks*, p. 2.

25 The UN Special Rapporteur on Trafficking in Persons, emphasized that while the full impact of the pandemic on trafficking in human beings is not yet fully possible to assess, "it is sure that its socio-economic consequences are already making precarious and marginalized people more vulnerable to trafficking and exploitation." See OHCHR (2020), [COVID-19 Position paper: The impact and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on trafficked and exploited persons](#).

age-sensitive approach, it is of vital importance that victims and survivors of THB are provided with access to all human rights protections guaranteed to them by national and international obligations.

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres has launched “a Call to Action to put human dignity and the promise of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights at the core of our work.”<sup>26</sup> He has also called for a “cease-fire at home.”<sup>27</sup> Furthermore, with regard to emergency situations, the United Nations General Assembly called upon governments and the international community “... to address the heightened vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking and exploitation, and associated gender-based violence.”<sup>28</sup>

*“... Survivors are suffering – mental health is suffering – we are having flashbacks of being trapped, of nearly dying, suffocating, of not having food, etc. We need to know that we won’t lose our homes, will have food and will not have to choose between life and income. Do I really have to die? Do I have to feel like I’m being suffocated every time I go out or have to stay in a tiny apartment?”* Female survivor from the U.S.

According to the World Bank, approximately 40 to 60 million people will be pushed into extreme poverty due to the pandemic.<sup>29</sup> Furthermore, a preliminary assessment by several UN agencies indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic could contribute between 83 and 132 million people to the total number of undernourished

globally in 2020.<sup>30</sup> People working in the informal economy are even more at-risk, which may result in different forms of exploitation.<sup>31</sup> The pandemic has decreased the transfer of remittances by 20 per cent, further exacerbating the vulnerabilities of at-risk groups dependent on these funds for survival.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, it has had a detrimental impact on the access to employment and rights of migrant workers, especially young women.<sup>33</sup> As many countries have partially or fully closed their borders, these travel restrictions may also lead many migrants or asylum-seekers to look for alternative, more dangerous migration routes, making them vulnerable to THB in transit and destination countries.<sup>34</sup>

*“[Victims are] being forced to interact with others who may be infected, as traffickers find new ways to exploit victims.”* Female survivor from the United Kingdom

According to survey respondents, the emergency measures during the COVID-19 pandemic in many countries presented a number of increased risks for VoTs, including intensification of control, violence and isolation by their exploiters and less access to assistance including medical services, employment opportunities, access to psychological services and legal assistance. During lockdown, anti-trafficking organizations said that more women came forward seeking help in leaving their traffickers.<sup>35</sup> There are concerns that VoTs will not seek medical assistance for COVID-19 due to fear of administrative detention deriving from their irregular migration status. VoTs in immigration detention or other detention settings may not be identified due to lack of access for

---

26 Guterres, A., ‘[We are all in this Together: Human Rights and COVID-19 Response and Recovery](#)’, 23 April 2020.

27 UN News, ‘[UN chief calls for domestic violence ‘ceasefire’ amid ‘horrifying global surge’](#)’, 6 April 2020.

28 UN General Assembly (2009), [Trafficking in women and girls: resolution, 30 January 2009](#), A/RES/63/156, paragraph 4; and UN General Assembly (2018), [Trafficking in women and girls: resolution, 17 December 2018](#), A/RES/73/146.

29 World Bank, ‘[World Bank Predicts Sharpest Decline of Remittances in Recent History](#)’, 22 April 2020.

30 FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO (2020), [The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World 2020: Transforming food systems for affordable healthy diets](#).

31 See World Bank, ‘[World Bank Predicts Sharpest Decline of Remittances in Recent History](#)’, 22 April 2020; and World Bank, ‘[The impact of COVID-19 \(Coronavirus\) on global poverty: Why Sub-Saharan Africa might be the region hardest hit](#)’, 20 Apr 2020.

32 UN News, ‘[Coronavirus a challenge, and opportunity, to fix remittances system than funnels billions home from abroad](#)’, 2 June 2020.

33 Vidal, E. M., ‘[Can data help improve migrant domestic workers’ lives?](#)’, Migration Data Portal, 3 September 2019.; See also Fraser, E. (2020), [Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Violence against Women and Girls](#), VAWG Helpdesk Research Report No. 284, p. 9.

34 OHCHR (2020), [COVID-19 Position paper: The impact and consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic on trafficked and exploited persons](#).

35 Tondo, L., ‘[Sex traffickers left thousands of women to starve during Italy lockdown](#)’, The Guardian, 10 July 2020.



NGOs that conduct monitoring. Other, identified VoTs were sometimes left in limbo and unable to return to their countries of origin due to border closures, lack of documentation and resources for return or difficult co-ordination between the countries' authorities. Some survivors of trafficking reported an increase in domestic violence, economic insecurity, and fear of traffickers released from prison due to COVID-19.<sup>36</sup> Furthermore, many VoTs, who are desperate to "repay" their growing debts to traffickers<sup>37</sup>, continue to be charged by

their traffickers for rent and food during the pandemic, they are being forced to engage in high-risk activities, such as exploitative informal labor, prostitution or the production of pornography online. This can likewise impact children of VoTs and their other family members, as usurious money-lending and debt bondage will also become a force-multiplier for sourcing child labour for bondage and trafficking from desperate families in rural locations.<sup>38</sup>

---

36 Sanctuary for Families, '[Safety Planning During COVID-19: Tips From Survivors For Survivors](#)', 17 March 2020.

37 Guilbert, K., '[Coronavirus feared delivering double blow to modern slaves in Britain](#)', Thomson Reuters Foundation, 24 March 2020.

38 Swain, B., '[Children Will Be More Vulnerable to Trafficking After COVID-19](#)', The Wire, 13 April 2020.

## II. OBJECTIVE AND SCOPE OF THE SURVEY

In order to evaluate and develop appropriate responses based on empirical evidence to address the impact of COVID-19 related measures and emerging trends on combatting trafficking in human beings, especially VoTs and survivors of trafficking, ODIHR and UN Women launched a survey of frontline organizations working in the field of human trafficking and survivors of trafficking.<sup>39</sup> ODIHR and UN Women, advised by a panel of experts and based on the survey findings, have developed short-term and mid-term policy recommendations to governments to ensure the implementation of the human rights, gender-sensitive, trauma-informed and victim-centred approach during and post COVID-19 pandemic. For more detailed information about the surveys and their participants see the full survey reports included as annexes to this publication.

### A. SURVIVORS' SURVEY

In total, 94 survivors of THB from 40 different countries participated in the study, of which the highest percentage represented the United States of America, Canada and South Africa.<sup>40</sup> Respondents were predominantly women, 35 to 50 years old followed by those 35 to 18 years old. In total, respondents from 41 countries participated in the research, from which responses from 40 countries were analyzed in total. No country was

represented by more than five respondents. Overall, 28.4 per cent of respondents were from Europe, 34.1 per cent from North America and Latin America, 21.6 per cent from Asia and 15.9 per cent from Africa. Safety and ethical protocols were put in place for informed consent and the security of survivors.

### B. FRONTLINE ORGANIZATIONS SURVEY

In total, respondents from 102 countries participated in the survey, 13 per cent from Africa, 19 per cent from the Americas, 26 per cent from Asia, 41 per cent from Europe and one per cent from Oceania. After the official data collection period, 15 more stakeholders completed the survey. The participants in the survey represent different age groups, nearly half were between 35 and 50 years old and 75 per cent were women. In the sub-sample from the OSCE region, this disproportion is more significant (87.4 percent) in comparison with other regions (61.2 per cent).<sup>41</sup> In total, respondents from 103 countries participated in the research, from which responses from 102 countries were analyzed in total.<sup>42</sup> Respondents from the United States represent the biggest subgroup among countries, all other countries were represented by one to 17 respondents. More than half of all respondents were from OSCE countries.<sup>43</sup>

---

39 Responses of non-governmental anti-trafficking stakeholders were collected from over 100 countries (45 countries from the OSCE region) and of survivors of trafficking from over 40 countries (13 countries from the OSCE region).

40 After the official data collection period, one more respondent completed the survey. The additional response from Tajikistan was not included in the survey report analysis. The response was provided after the closing of the survey and could not be included in the analysis.

41 Responses of stakeholders from OSCE member states were analyzed and presented only in those cases where p-value is lower than 0,05.

42 The additional responses represented countries already included in the survey report analysis, with the exception of the Republic of Niger. The other responses were provided after the closing of the survey and could not be included in the analysis. The majority of respondents who participated in the survey after the official data-collection period were women (N=8), one person preferred not to identify his/her gender.

43 The Organization comprises **57 participating States** that span the globe, encompassing three continents – North America, Europe and Asia – and more than a billion people. The 57 OSCE participating States are: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan.

### III. SUMMARY OF THE SURVEYS' FINDINGS

According to the survey respondents, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted the effective functioning of NRMs and national child protection systems. The survey results demonstrated difficulties in accessing identification procedures, sheltered accommodation and social services. Other obstacles mentioned by respondents included accessing referral to NRMs or equivalent mechanisms, regularization of migration status, availability of non-sheltered accommodation, as well as psychological, medical, interpretation and legal services. In addition, civil society frontline responders indicated a need for additional funding to continue to address issues resulting from the pandemic.

Due to the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on law enforcement operations and capacity, detection of trafficking cases became more challenging. VoTs, in the process of receiving the statutory VoT status experienced delays resulting in a lack of access to services and, thus, a heightened vulnerability to further exploitation. VoTs also experienced difficulties in accessing sheltered accommodations and other needed assistance, as many shelters and service providers are only partially functional, closed or not accepting new clients. With regards to child VoTs, changes in procedure, delays and postponements in the appointment of legal guardians were noted, which is significant as it impacts children's ability to access appropriate protection and legal procedures. Besides limited access to accommodation, VoTs and survivors of trafficking experienced challenges in accessing health care, including access to primary doctors, psychological services, hospitals, pharmacies, COVID-19 testing, and personal protective equipment. Particularly significant is the increase of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) symptoms and other psychological issues reported among VoTs and survivors.

There have been changes in procedure, delays and postponements in administrative, criminal and civil cases due to the implementation of emergency measures, which negatively impacts victims' and survivors' access to protection, justice and redress. Administrative procedures, which are central to the processing of asylum applications, temporary and permanent residence permits, work permits and the regularization of residence

during the COVID-19 pandemic, have been affected. Concerns were also raised about convicted traffickers who use the pandemic to claim that they are no longer generating income and therefore cannot afford to pay court-ordered compensation to VoTs.

*"Better knowledge of escape plans for women, they feel they have nowhere to go, shelters are full of COVID-19. Apartments won't rent, girls can't access social workers or social services to escape."* Female survivor from Canada

*"[Provide] financial support from the state to cope with the difficulties even after the COVID-19 pandemic."* Female survivor from Albania

The COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in a tremendous loss of employment around the world, resulting in a lack of financial means to cover basic necessities, such as food, housing and childcare. This is further corroborated by a report from UN Women on "Addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women migrant workers", which states that the socio-economic crises triggered by the pandemic will exacerbate the vulnerability of at-risk populations through loss of livelihoods, lack of social protection and medical care and reduced remittances from migrant workers. The survey also found that effective remedies in the form of financial assistance are limited or nonexistent, impeding the process of reintegration and social inclusion and increasing the vulnerability of the survivors to exploitation and re-trafficking. In some countries, survivors still living in sheltered accommodation are prevented from moving out as respective emergency measures make it difficult to visit rental housing and sign rental contracts. Furthermore, VoTs are unable to return to their country of origin or experience delays due to closed borders, interrupted long-distance transport and unavailability of assistance from governmental agencies and service providers in the country of return.

#### A. SURVIVOR SURVEY

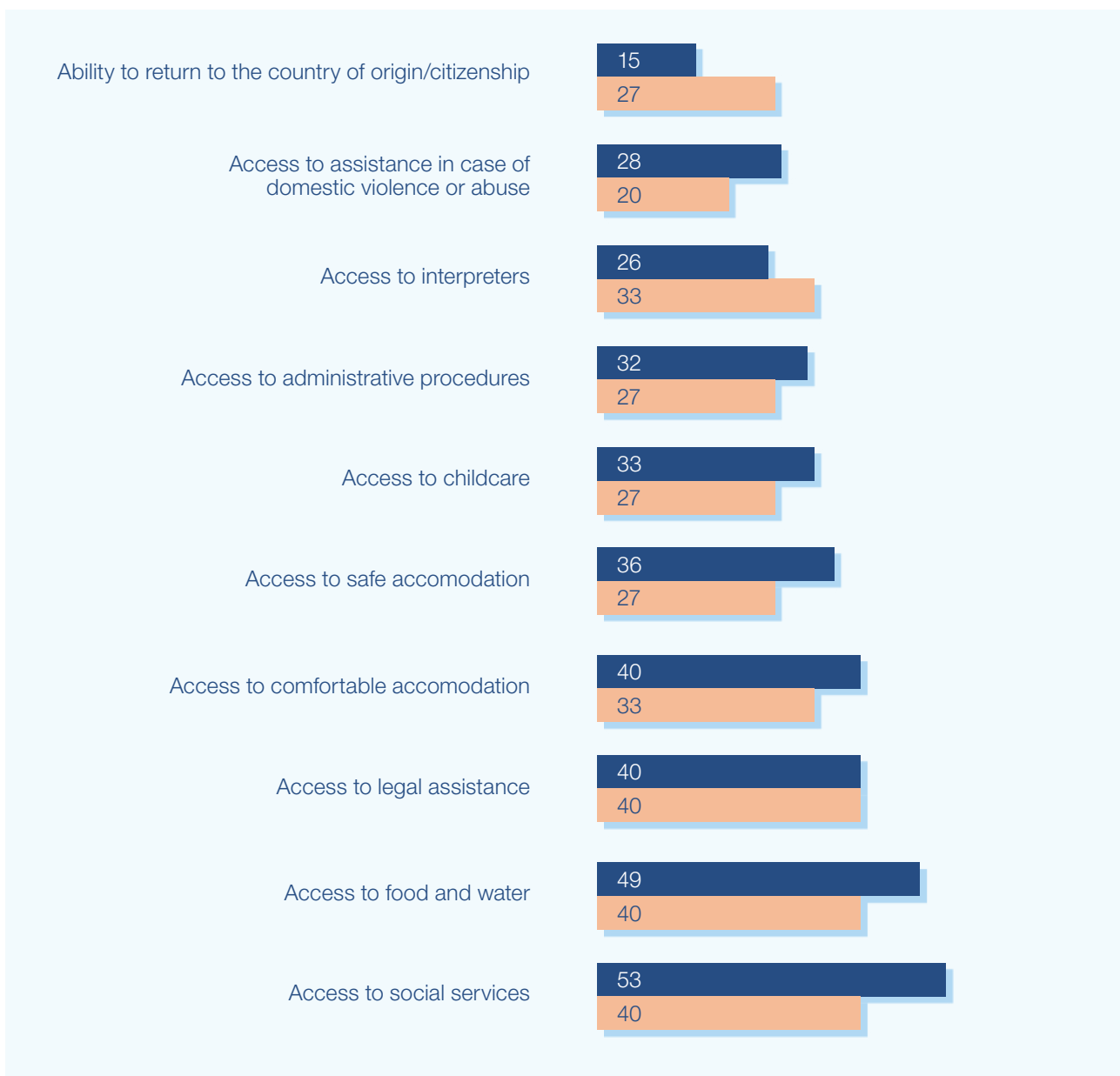
As the survey findings demonstrate, the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant negative impacts on the situation and well-being of survivors of trafficking. However, this negative impact was only partially due to

new pandemic-related needs and challenges, as well as the implementation of various response measures. The pandemic exacerbated and exposed the already existing gaps in national anti-trafficking frameworks overall, and particularly in NRMs and equivalent systems. It has also exacerbated pre-existing socio-economic inequalities and has brought to light the gender discrimination and harmful social norms that sustain violence against women and girls, including trafficking. These have not only been exacerbated during this crisis, but are also putting all the progress that has been made in the last few decades at risks. Due to measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic this survey of survivors found:

- a. Survivors of trafficking reported lack of access to basic needs, including access to food and water, safe and comfortable accommodation and lack of access to testing for COVID-19, although access to information and employment, psychological, medical and social services was prioritized by respondents.

*“Most government online recourses take Wi-Fi and I don’t have money to buy it.”* Female survivor from South Africa

- b. A majority of survivors reported negative changes in psychological and financial well-being. Survivors reported a decline in financial



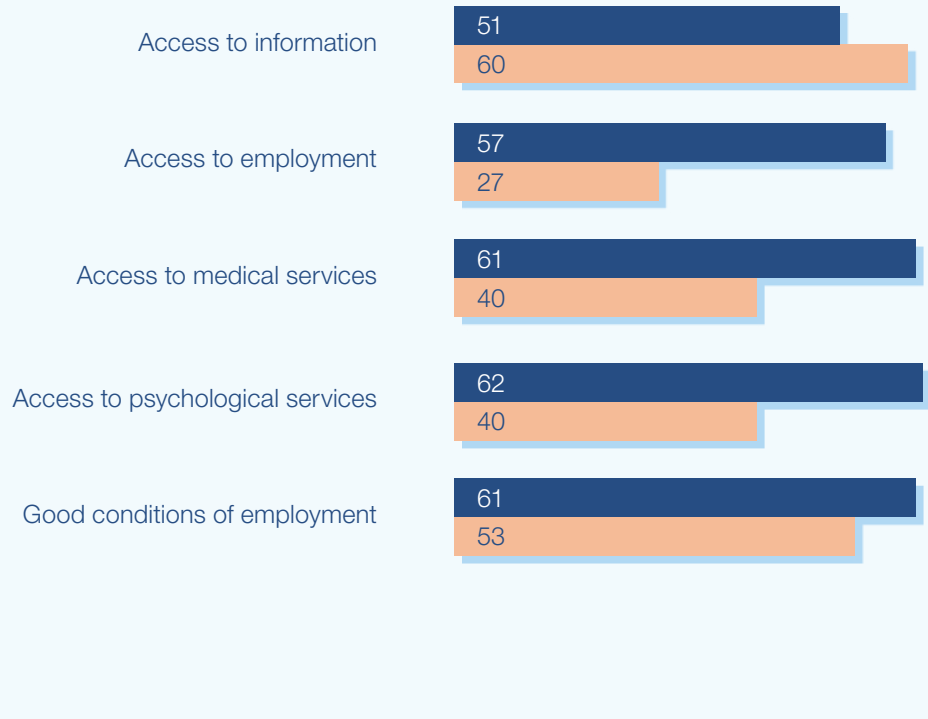


Figure 1. Current need for goods and services among male and female survivors, %

well-being due to the lack of job opportunities and unemployment, and the overall economic downturn. Psychological wellbeing, likewise, declined due to a high level of uncertainty, isolation due to restriction of movement and retriggering of PTSD.

*“I think the biggest issue for me as a survivor of human trafficking and COVID-19, is the PTSD. We are living in unprecedented times and while we are ‘in the life’, everything is chaos. There are a lot of parallels that influence my increased depression and anxiety.”* Female survivor from the United States

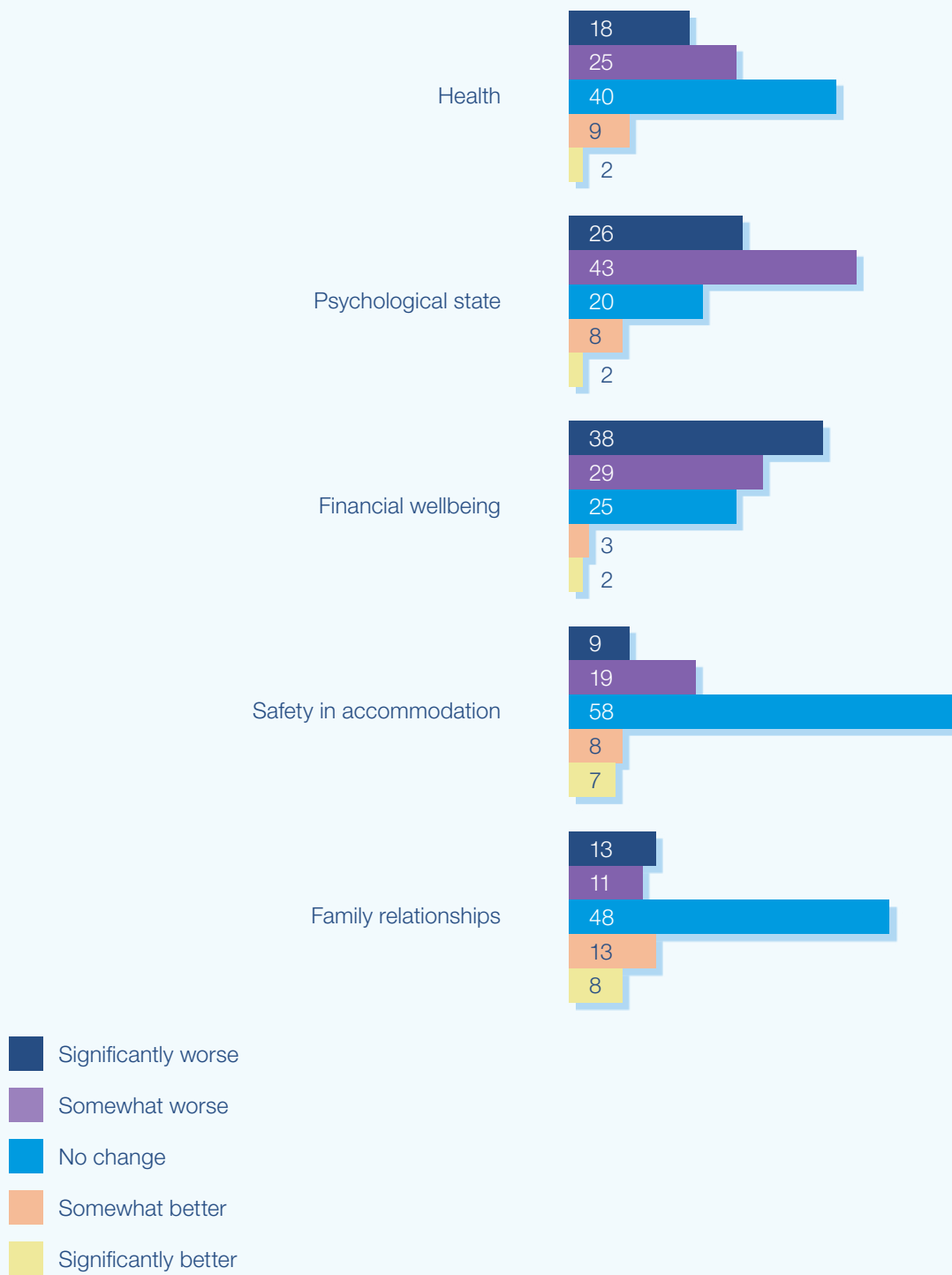


Figure 2a. Self-reported changes in life situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, %

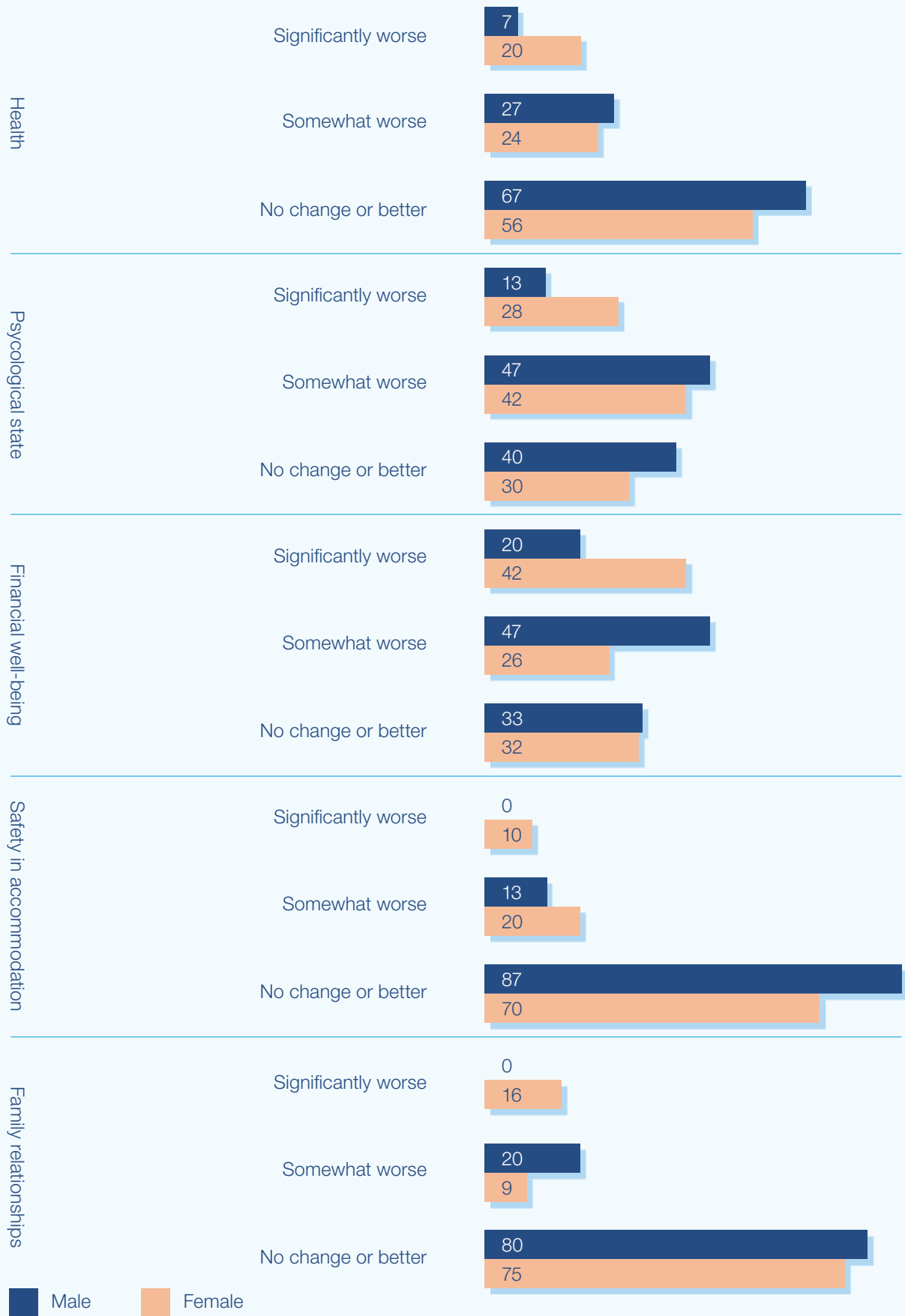
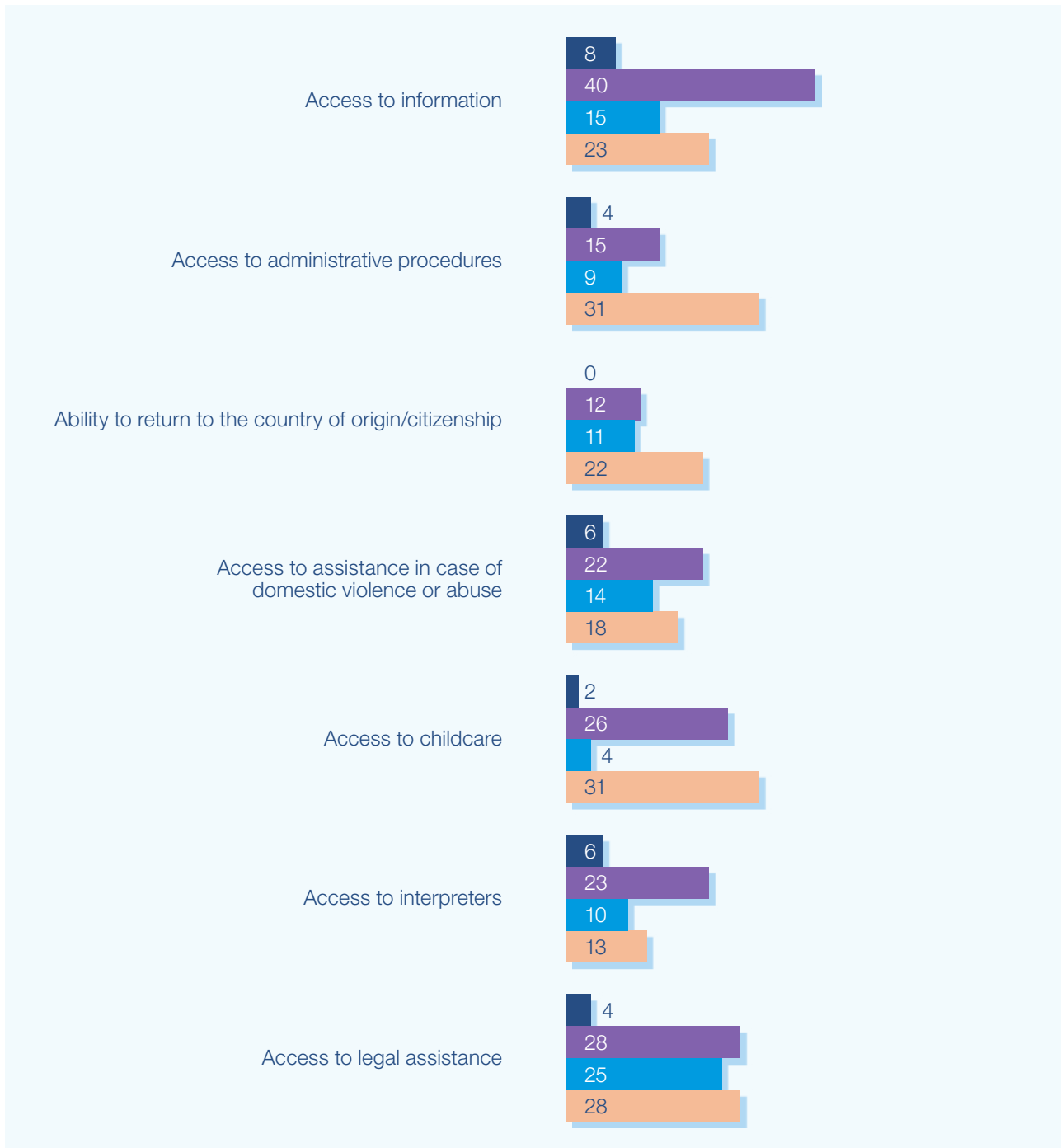


Figure 2b. Self-reported changes in life situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic among male and female survivors, %

- c. Compared to the situation before the pandemic, survivors were faced with more difficult access to almost all services and goods. The services that were most often reported by survivors as being more difficult to access include medical services, employment opportunities, access to psychological services and legal assistance.

*"...we are not anyone's priority."* Female survivor from Argentina

*"Because of the curfew, the Ministry of Justice has put all actions on hold and this caused delays in obtaining decisions for VOT cases to access shelter."* Female survivor from Iraq





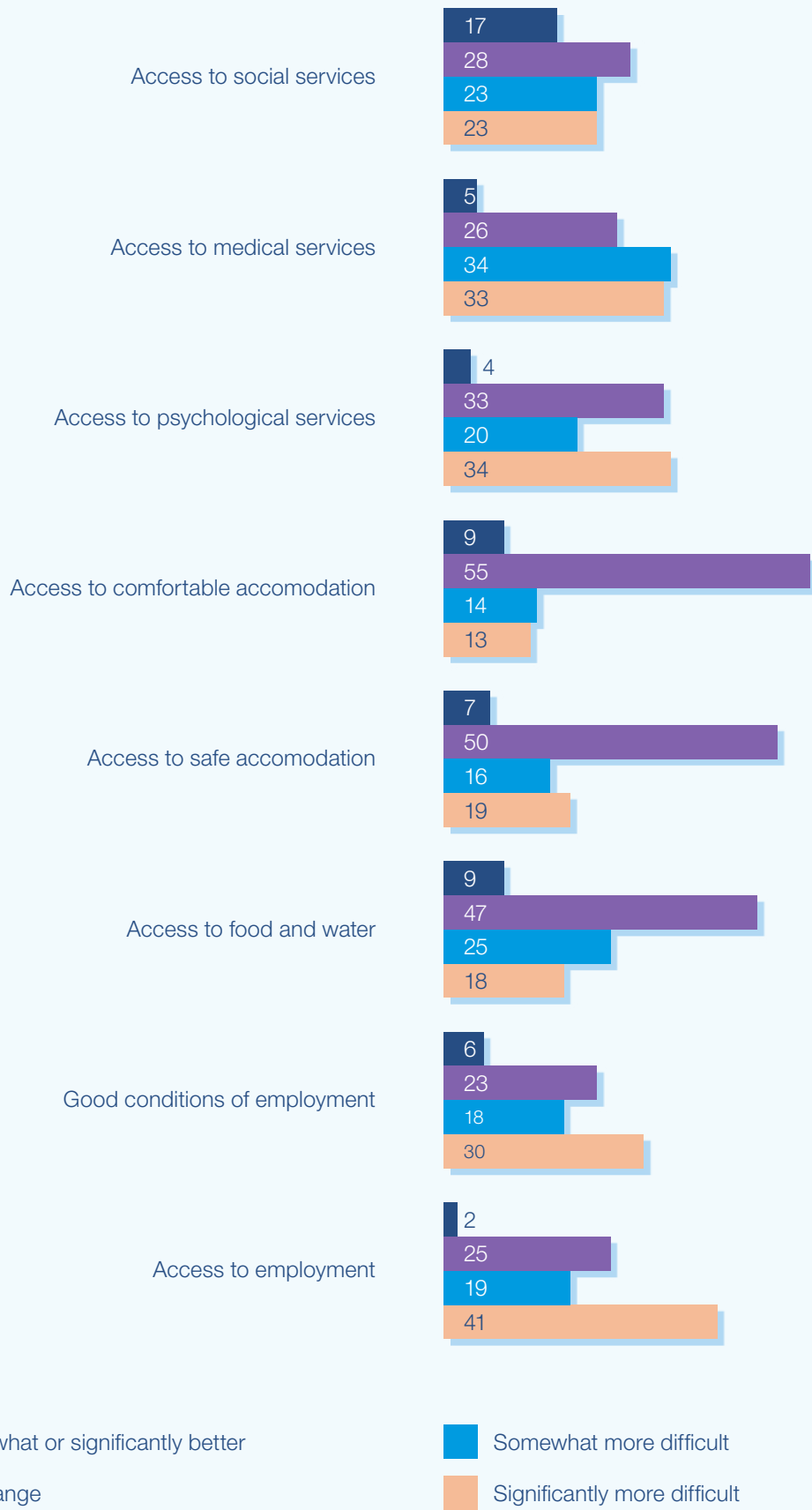


Figure 3. Self-reported changes in the access to services, %

- d. Survivors prioritized their access to the following services during COVID-19 pandemic: assistance with employment, psychological medical and social services, as well as access to information for VoTs and survivors. Overall, survivors were poorly informed about changes in service provision during the pandemic. About half of the survivors experienced delays in receiving statutory status of VoT or in other types of legal procedures. These delays negatively affected survivors' ability to access shelter accommodation, reunification with their children and financial compensation.

*"My criminal injuries hearing has finished, but they won't mail out the results and compensation until after COVID is over."* Female survivor from Canada

*"I arrived here in Ireland in January 2019 and since then police used to come and interrogate me until the last time, when they took all my original documents and I have not heard anything from them. I'm scared to call them and ask for my documents because the woman made me feel like I had committed a crime. She called me a liar and every time she came around, I was petrified."* Female survivor from Ireland

*"Citizenship case delayed."* Male survivor from Kazakhstan

- e. Survivors experienced similar challenges regardless of where they were located. However, respondents from outside the OSCE region reported the need for a larger number of services and repeatedly prioritized access to NRMs as

the most important measure after the pandemic. At the same time, survivors from the OSCE region highlighted the need for access to psychological services and timely provision of statutory status of VoT as priorities after the pandemic.

*"I appreciate the services that are offering text and telephone counseling. It should continue to be offered post-Coronavirus."* Female survivor from Canada

- f. More than half of survivors believe that the pandemic has exacerbated the vulnerability of at-risk groups to THB. They noted that the economic downturn will increase the vulnerability to recruitment by traffickers and the risk of re-victimization of survivors, and that these factors have been further negatively impacted by reprioritization of human and financial resources by government institutions to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

*"Undoubtedly, since victims are always more susceptible to falling due to lack of income. From my point of view... it would really be a great if the State helps with some type of compensation to face these moments in a better way without having to even think about going to places like brothels or the street."* Female survivor from Uruguay

- g. Online forms of recruitment by traffickers have continued during the pandemic. Survivors have been targeted during COVID-19 pandemic by traffickers mostly online.

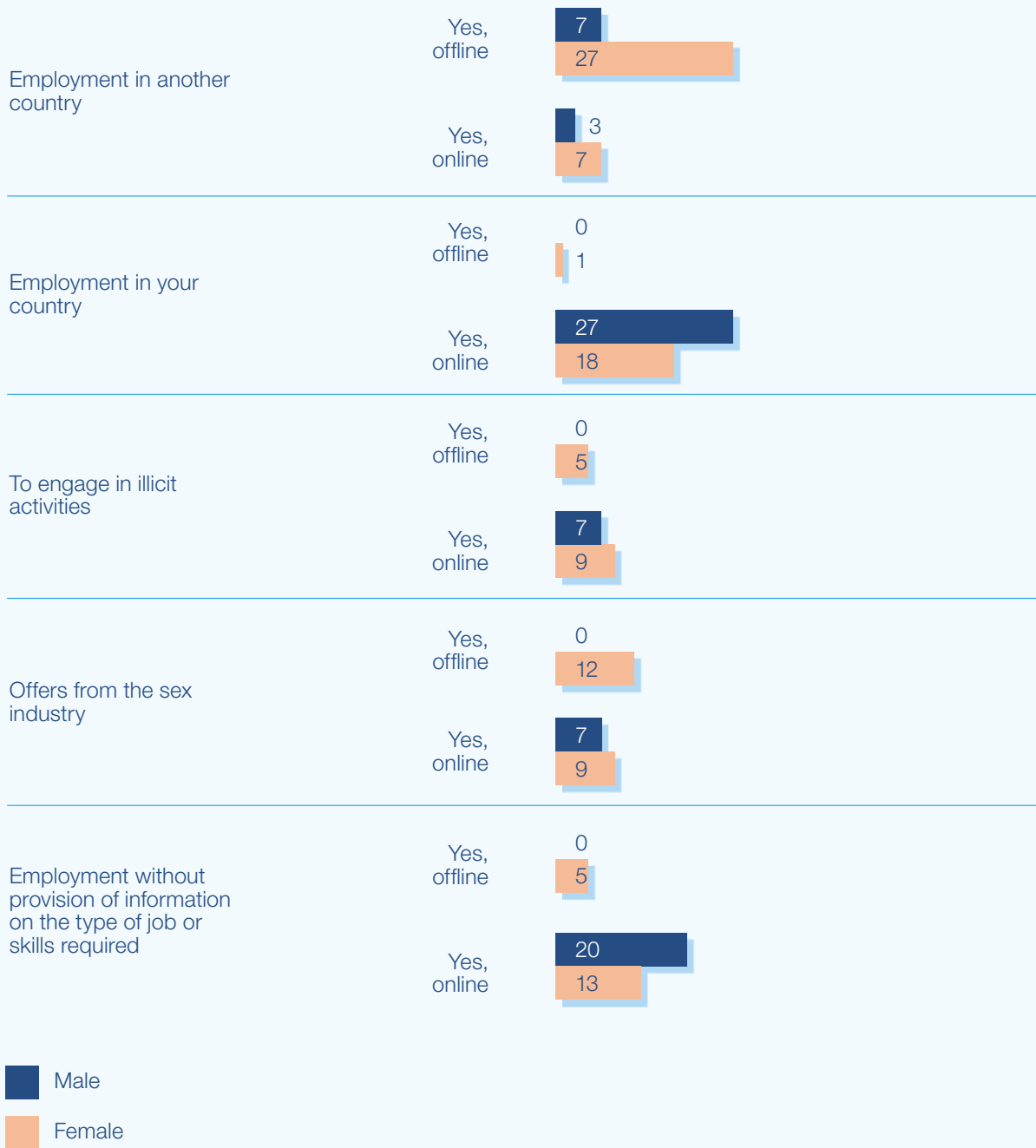


Figure 4. Male and female survivors being exposed with different types of offers during pandemic online and offline, %

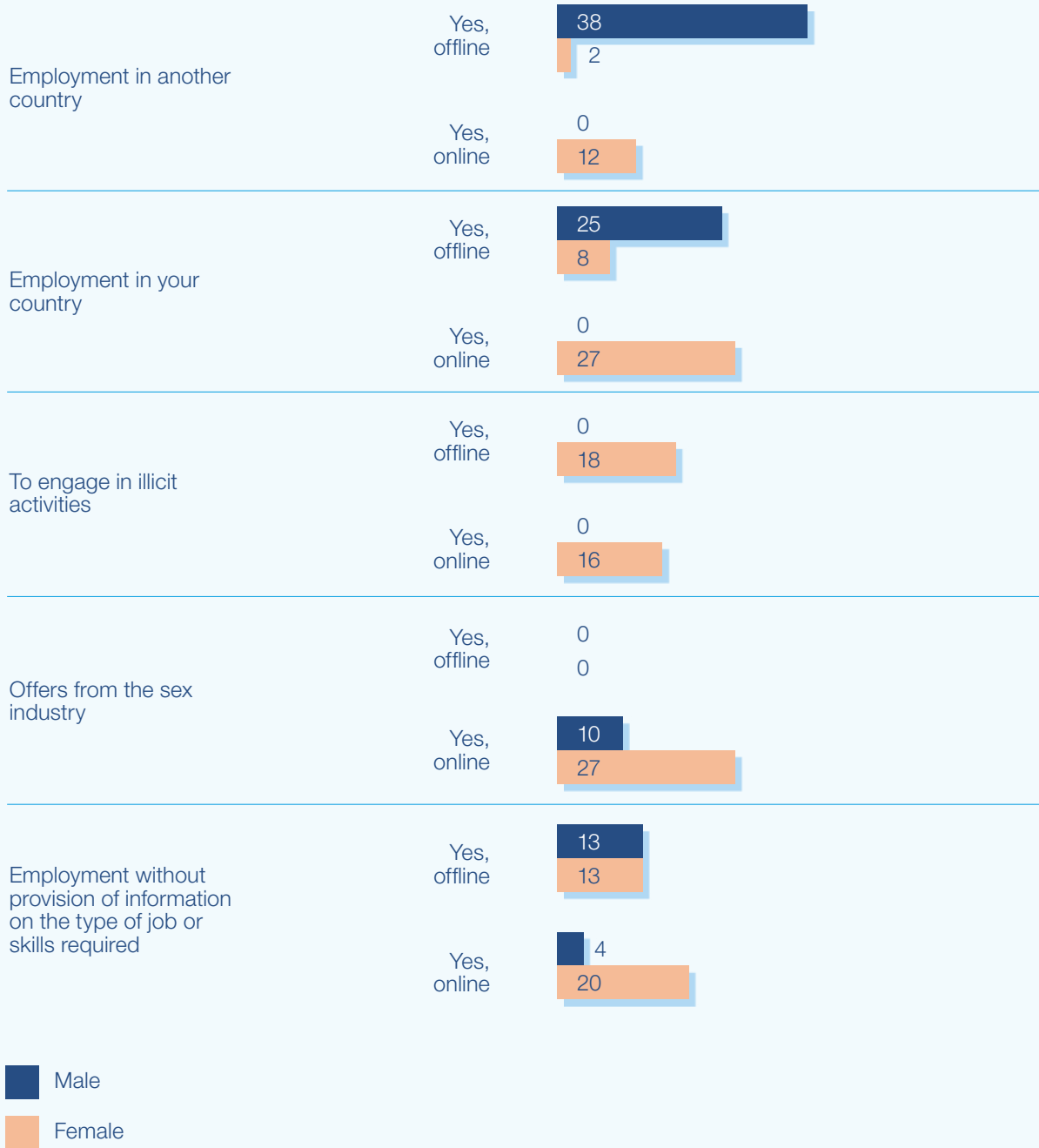


Figure 5. Male and female survivors who know other survivors or victims who were exposed to different types of offers during the pandemic, both online and offline, %

- h. VoTs who are currently in situations of exploitation may also be facing new or more severe forms of exploitation due to the financial downturn, which has affected the traffickers' ability to generate profits. VoTs are also at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 due to their trafficking situation.

*"The new ways of pimps using youth for drug trafficking, labor and sex trafficking among homeless youth, and houses of abuse with fathers that drink."* Frontline stakeholder from South Africa

*"Recruitment tactics during COVID 19 are almost exclusively online now. Recruitment continues through social media platforms but is also expanding into online video games. There was also a news article regarding the use of pornography multiplied many times over in light of the "stay at home" orders. Additionally, there was also a news piece about those that are invading Zoom are displaying child pornography in an effort to decrease the natural repulsion toward such pornography and potentially increases interest in the same. Pornography is essentially a gateway to sex trafficking both for buyers and victims. Buyers viewing pornography may be more inclined to consider seeking out a trafficker and it is common for traffickers to expose children to pornography to convince them sexual acts are normal."* Frontline stakeholder from USA

*"Currently criminal trafficking networks are readapting and changing methods of capturing and exploiting the victims directly, we had already detected their operation through the networks but now they have completely turned to this new context of physical risk of contact. Rents go up, where victims are housed and they are offered more hours of connectivity, less money, more expenses applied to technologies."* Female survivor from Argentina

- i. Survivors prioritized access to psychological services, financial assistance, medical services and sheltered accommodation. In addition, survivors recommended that to effectively combat THB, a comprehensive set of measures should be implemented, including:

- i. Legal and procedural changes focused on increasing sentencing for traffickers and addressing demand in the sex industry that fuels THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation;

*"Hold sex buyers accountable. Adopt the Nordic model and arrest/charge the men who are driving the demand."* Female survivor from Canada

*"Higher penalties for 'Johns,' including fines, impounding cars, and publicly posting names and mug shots".* Female survivor from USA

- ii. Changes in public opinion and social norms through awareness campaigns about THB and de-stigmatization of VoTs and survivors;
- iii. The need for services to be long-term, from identification to reintegration/return to the country of origin, and ensuring that the support, assistance and protection provided are monitored and evaluated and are based on a victim-centered, gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach, as well as strengthened interagency co-operation; and

*"The lack of resources has not allowed us to effectively support the basic needs of the beneficiaries."* Frontline stakeholder from Bolivia

*"Assist more women, girls and adolescents. Give them financial support, professional and intellectual training, also with follow-up, so that all those measures are fulfilled. And that it is not only a number for the statistics, but that the achievements of these women are demonstrated with facts, since everything is important and necessary. Give us necessary tools so that we not only go out to work, but also, we can reason and discern what is best for us."* Female survivor from Uruguay

*"The government should proactively co-ordinate and collaborate with the UN, IOs, and local NGOs to provide services for return of migrants (both regular or irregular). And also, safe migration and human trafficking awareness should be facilitated at the community*

*level especially high-risk of migration and border area. Besides, that Department of Labour should closely co-ordinate with recruitment agencies to be official recruitment and not to violate the CoC. And also, the Department of Immigration should strengthen the border control system.”* Female survivor from Myanmar

- iv. Eradication of poverty, access to education and equality would help to achieve the decrease the number of VoTs and the crime of THB overall.

*“Job creation.”* Female survivor from Cameroon

*“...increased education, increased efforts to achieve equality and eradication of poverty.”* Male survivor from USA

- j. Even though the number of men responding to the survey was significantly smaller than that of women, the data show that male and female survivors and VoTs have different needs and priorities in terms of accessing services, both during and after the pandemic. Female respondents prioritized financial assistance, while men focused on medical and legal services. Both male and female respondents believe that the COVID-19 pandemic has a more significant negative impact on women survivors and VoTs in comparison to their male counterparts.

## **B. FRONTLINE ORGANIZATIONS SURVEY**

This survey found that social, psychological and legal services, as well as sheltered accommodation are provided to VoTs and survivors of trafficking in the majority of countries represented in the survey. The accessibility of other services essential for rehabilitation, reintegration and protection of VoTs varied across countries, including substance dependency treatment, long-term accommodation, assistance with employment, professional education or skill training, and witness protection. Overall, OSCE participating States with NRMs or equivalent systems tend to have more accessible rehabilitation and reintegration services for VoTs in comparison with non-OSCE countries. According to respondents, due to measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- a. Governments’ capacity to CTHB has been negatively impacted. This impact is particularly evident in the following areas: identification procedures, sheltered accommodation and social services.

*“There have been difficulties around identification of survivors, immediate safeguarding and assistance.”* Frontline stakeholder from the United Kingdom

*“There are many victims placed in shelters in which they can’t follow the social distancing guidelines.”* Frontline stakeholder from Germany

- b. The proper functioning of NRMs or equivalent systems has also been affected. Approximately half of the countries currently have an only partially operational NRM or equivalent system.
- c. It has become more difficult for VoTs and survivors of trafficking to access rehabilitation services, administrative procedures and protection as stated by an overwhelming majority of respondents
- d. Respondents reported experiencing challenges in the areas of interagency co-operation, additional funding requirements, emerging additional needs (protective equipment, special requirements for shelters, etc.) and increasing vulnerabilities of at-risk groups. Taking into account the combination of these factors, respondents concluded that additional measures to prevent THB are required during states of emergency.

*“Government employees are working from home and not always easily available. Online meetings cannot be arranged due to lack of technical capacities of government staff. Contact via telephone is also limited.”* Frontline stakeholder from Austria

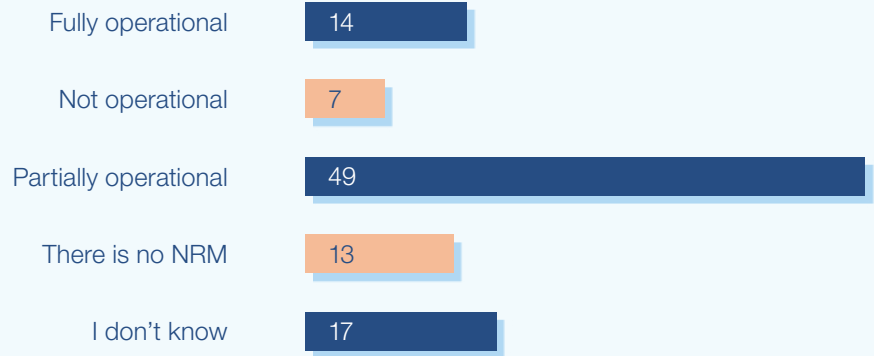


Figure 6. Operationality of NRM or its equivalent system, %

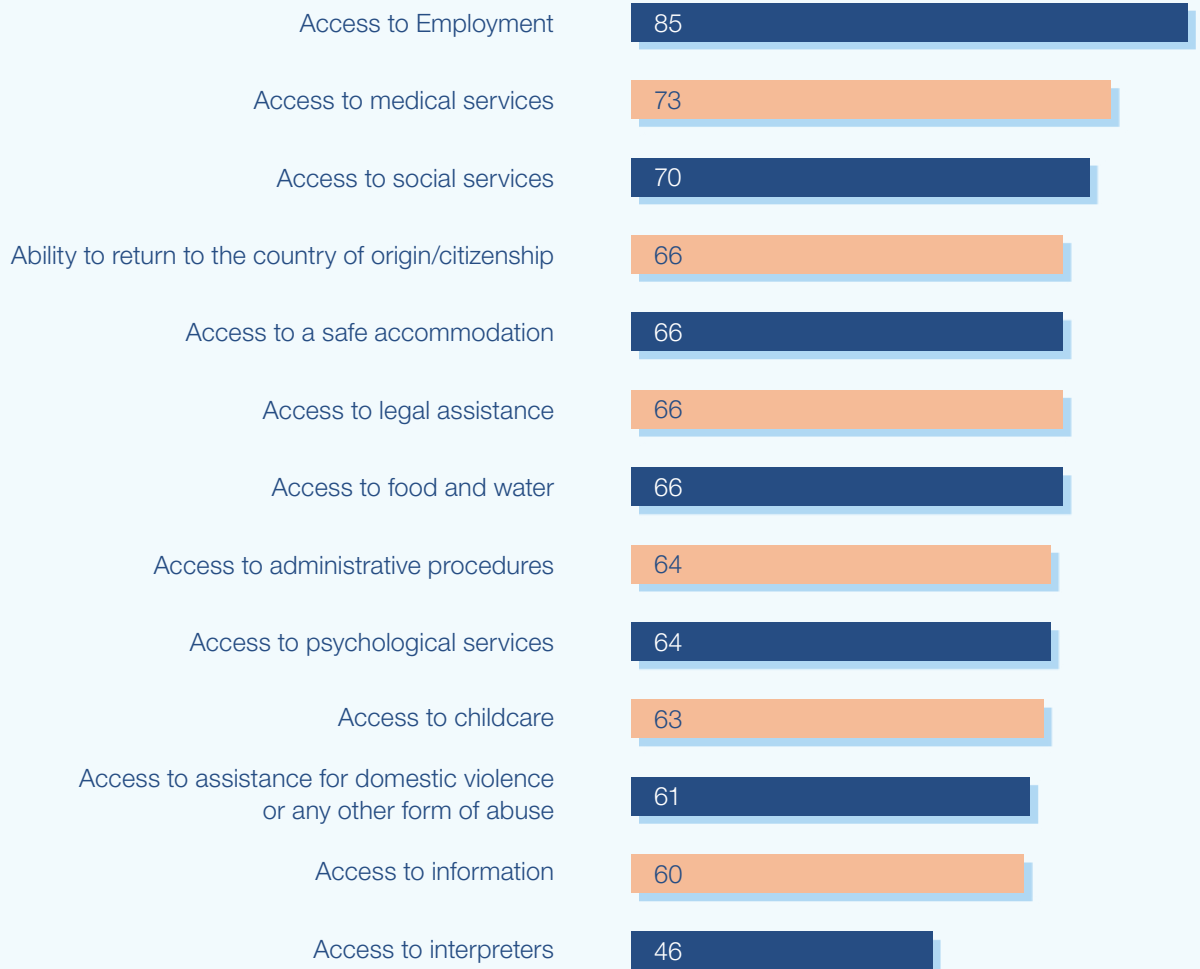
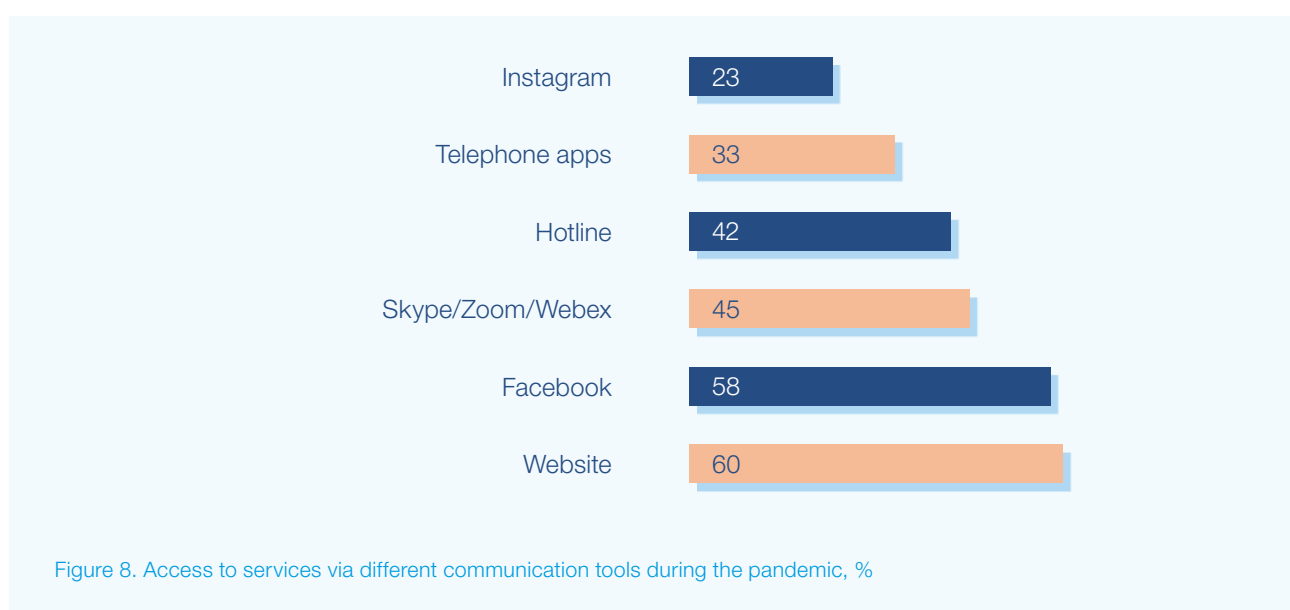


Figure 7. Decreased access to services and opportunities for the beneficiaries, %

The mandatory 14-day 'quarantine' that is imposed on people (general population, families, unaccompanied minors) upon their arrival in Greece through the islands takes place at the shores where the migrant boats first arrive. There are difficulties with protective custody of unaccompanied minors in police stations, where the hygiene standards are too poor and the minors stay for extended time periods, since the shelters do not accept new cases." Frontline stakeholder from Greece

- e. While traffickers have been able to quickly adapt their activities to the online sphere during the pandemic, government agencies

and civil society have had difficulty doing so. Approximately 9 out of 10 respondent organizations are able to provide access to services to their beneficiaries, but mostly by phone. Online services are underutilized by organizations providing assistance to VoTs and survivors of trafficking. When different communication tools are utilized, they mainly constitute websites, Facebook pages, Skype/Zoom/WebEx, online hotlines, telephone apps and Instagram. Despite this, survivors noted that access to these tools, or simply access to Internet can be costly and inaccessible to them.



- f. Respondents reported an increased vulnerability to recruitment by traffickers online and increased vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation (women – in physical locations and girls – online) and trafficking of men and boys for the purpose of exploitation in criminal activities (men – labour exploitation and boys – forced begging). Emerging trafficking dynamics are gendered and exacerbated by pre-existing gender inequality issues.

“Many of those in prostitution, including victims of trafficking, have been moved online to offer remote ‘services.’ This represents serious risks now and in perpetuity as the online material can be shared without consent now and in the future. Pimps and traffickers are undoubtedly using online platforms to continue making profits from victims of sexual exploitation.” Frontline stakeholder from Ireland

- g. Girls face increased vulnerability to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation online (via webcam, online pornography, etc.) and forced marriage. Boys were reported to be more vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of criminal activities and forced begging.

“However, online recruitment might increase, thus government should vigilant to monitor the online/social media trends.” Frontline stakeholder from Bangladesh



*“Social media is by far the biggest danger and with the economy taking such a hit, it will be a lot easier to “recruit” young girls. The trend is already on Instagram where some girls will “Promote” their friends by posting them and often it results in sexual exploitation by promising of trips to Dubai and other cities and financial support during these hard times. The little to no support to awareness campaigns to stop this trend or even raise awareness about the dangers have already put us on the back foot and it will have catastrophic consequences for many young girls, especially when the lockdowns are over and travelling starts again within and outside borders.”* Frontline stakeholder from South Africa

- h. Vulnerability of children to THB has reportedly increased, which requires the preparedness of all stakeholders to provide additional services for trafficked children as a result.

*“Trends: online sexual exploitation of children is increasing.”* Frontline stakeholder from Georgia

*“The identification of children has been halted as NGOs are restricted to visit all the hot spots and at risks areas.”* Frontline stakeholder from Tanzania

- i. Operations of shelters for VoTs have been significantly impacted. A quarter of respondents indicated that shelters, despite having sufficient spaces, are not allowed to accept new beneficiaries as a precaution against the spread of the virus. This may pose additional risks of secondary victimization, as it leads to decreased accessibility of safe accommodation.

- j. Beneficiaries of anti-trafficking organizations may have additional needs and organizations require additional funding to manage the pandemic’s mid – to long-term consequences for CTHB. Additional funding is needed to support NGOs working in the sphere of THB both in the current situation and in the future.
- k. Administrative and legal procedures related to VoTs have slowed, NGOs have a decreased accessibility to governmental institutions, which results in additional challenges in interagency co-operation. Some stakeholders involved in CTHB were reassigned to pandemic-related responses, which poses an additional challenge in interagency co-operation with NGOs, international organizations, governmental institutions and law enforcement agencies.

*“A number of referrals, requests for information, have not been addressed as quickly as our beneficiaries need.”* Frontline stakeholder from the Philippines

*“The lockdown has slowed down activities.”* Frontline stakeholder from Nigeria

- i. Post pandemic, respondents pointed to the need for governments to undertake measures to address demand for THB in the areas of legislation, prevention and strengthening of anti-trafficking frameworks.

**DURING IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES RELATED TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION HAS:**

- Closed its premises
- Sufficient spaces
- Sufficient spaces, but does not accept new beneficiaries
- Insufficient spaces
- I don't know

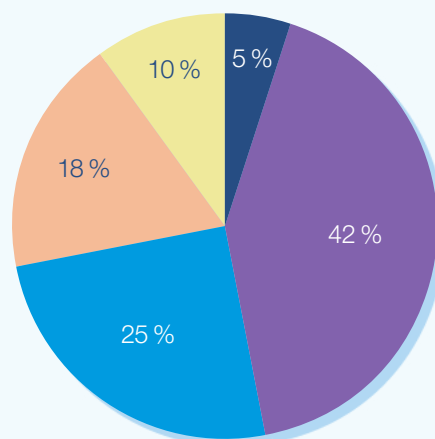


Figure 9. Accessibility of sheltered accommodation

**DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION CURRENTLY REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO ADDRESS NEEDS RESULTING FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

■ Yes  
■ No

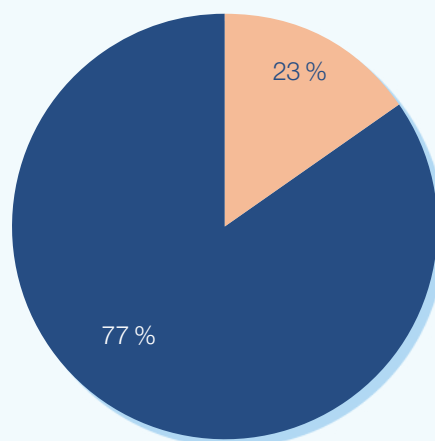


Figure 10. Additional funding needed for NGOs to address needs resulting from COVID-19 pandemic: currently

**WILL YOUR ORGANIZATION REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO ADDRESS NEEDS RESULTING FROM COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS**

■ Yes  
■ No

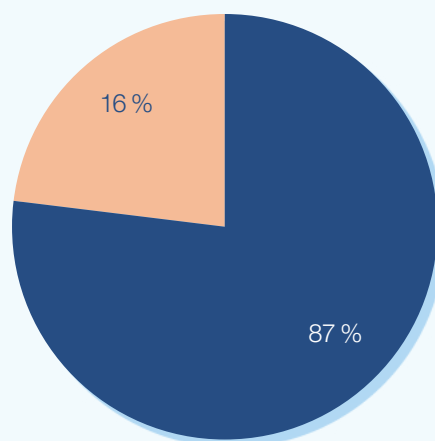


Figure 11. Additional funding needed for NGOs to address needs resulting from COVID-19 pandemic: in the next 12 months

*“We need effective operating protocols in agreement with non-governmental organizations.”* Frontline stakeholder from Italy

*“Before, during and after COVID-19, we recommend more awareness that sex trafficking often occurs under the guise of consensual sex work. Any level of education around this misconception can be beneficial; this includes online and in-person sex work.”* Frontline stakeholder from USA

- m. More efforts are needed to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic on at-risk groups vulnerable to THB (including migrants, women in the sex industry, and unaccompanied minors) and those whose vulnerability has been exacerbated due to the subsequent economic downturn.

*“Improve preventive measures within social services, ensure access to education, ensure gender equality. In my view, governments must ensure that recovery measures address the special needs of vulnerable groups, in order to prevent them from being exploited.”* Frontline stakeholder from Sweden

- n. The majority of the respondents expressed a strong interest in the development of a national protocol on prevention of THB and protection of the human rights of VoTs and survivors of trafficking during states of emergency, including pandemics.

*“Create a national protocol for a pandemic.”* Frontline stakeholder from Indonesia

*“Effective operating protocols in agreement with non-governmental organizations”.* Frontline stakeholder from Italy

## IV. EMERGING COVID-19 THB CHALLENGES AND TRENDS

Comprehensive analytical data on the impact and developments of the COVID-19 pandemic are currently scarce or in the process of being compiled. The findings of these surveys as well as information from articles, statements and other official documents clearly indicate the following emerging THB challenges and trends related to the pandemic.

### A. DISCRIMINATION AND THB

As THB is a grave violation of human rights which relates to people's vulnerabilities in relation to different forms of discrimination, back in 2001, the former UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Mary Robinson concluded<sup>44</sup>, gender, racial and social discrimination are interconnected. The pandemic is putting further strain on these realities and exacerbating the pre-existing racial inequalities of VoTs. Almost twenty years later, her statement is as relevant as ever. UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres has expressed concern over the "tsunami of hate and xenophobia, scapegoating and scare-mongering" that the pandemic has unleashed.<sup>45</sup> All around the world, ethnic and racial minorities, especially those from East Asia, have been targeted, from racial slurs and xenophobic attacks, to actions by states who seek a convenient scapegoat.<sup>46</sup> In some countries, there were mass raids to detain refugees and migrant workers groups considered responsible for the spread of COVID-19.<sup>47</sup> For instance, UN Women reported that women migrant workers

were kept from entering their home villages as they were seen as 'virus carriers'.<sup>48</sup>

Data show that racial and ethnic minorities are being most impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic, which may exacerbate their vulnerability to THB.<sup>49</sup> In many countries with ethnic disparities in wealth, it is expected that people from minority ethnic and racial groups who already have lower access to financial resources, including well-paid employment, will suffer a severe loss of income due to the economic impact of the pandemic.<sup>50</sup> Where minority groups are more often unemployed, underemployed or in precarious employment, they may have no or limited access to social protection and health care, making them vulnerable to taking on high-risk and exploitative work to meet their basic needs. Precarious housing conditions pose a further challenge, as racial and ethnic groups have in some cases been deliberately targeted and evicted from their homes,<sup>51</sup> making them dependent on limited shelter spaces or forcing them to live on the streets.<sup>52</sup> As previous crises have demonstrated, the medium and long-term economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are likely to affect certain racial and ethnic minority communities disproportionately, through higher unemployment, lower incomes and higher housing costs compared to the majority population.<sup>53</sup> Furthermore, economic inequalities faced by women among ethnic and racial minorities are even deeper because women of color and from marginalized groups suffer intersecting forms of discrimination.

---

44 UN Department of Public Information (2001), [The Race Dimensions of Trafficking in Persons: Especially Women and Children](#), p.2.

45 Human Rights Watch (HRW), ['COVID-19 Fueling Anti-Asian Racism and Xenophobia Worldwide: National Action Plans Needed to Counter Intolerance'](#), 12 May 2020.

46 ODIHR (2020), [Inclusion and not hatred needed to overcome the common crisis we face, OSCE human rights head says](#), 17 April 2020.

47 *Ibid.*

48 Forthcoming publication: UN Women ROAP (2020), Rapid Assessment: Impact of COVID-19 on CSOs.

49 Ro, C., ['Coronavirus: Why some racial groups are more vulnerable'](#), BBC, 21 April 2020.

50 Francis, D. & Valodia I., ['South Africa needs to mitigate the worst of its inequalities in tackling coronavirus'](#), The Conversation, 5 April 2020.

51 HRW, ['China: COVID-19 Discrimination Against Africans. Forced Quarantines, Evictions, Refused Services in Guangzhou'](#), 5 May 2020.

52 Lussenhop, J., ['Coronavirus: Why US is expecting an 'avalanche' of evictions'](#), BBC, 19 June 2020.

53 Fisher, P. & Nandi, A. (2015), [Poverty Across Ethnic Groups Through Recession and Austerity](#).

In turn, this will exacerbate their vulnerability to THB and will make them easy targets for traffickers.

## **B. GENDER AND THE SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

Women and girls are among those groups whose vulnerability to THB and exploitation has been exacerbated and intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic, its socio-economic consequences and the response measures adopted.<sup>54</sup> While women and girls constituted the majority of detected victims of THB before the outbreak, it is likely that they will be specifically targeted by traffickers during and in the aftermath of the pandemic.<sup>55</sup> According to the survey results, emerging trafficking dynamics are highly gendered and exacerbated by preexisting gender inequality issues. For instance, there is an increased vulnerability of women and girls to recruitment by traffickers online. The survey findings demonstrated heightened vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation (women – in physical locations suggested by 62 per cent of respondents, girls – online suggested by 62 per cent of respondents), while men and boys were targeted by traffickers for the purpose of exploitation in labour or criminal activities (men – labour exploitation online suggested by 60 per cent of respondents, boys – forced begging online suggested by 51 per cent of respondents).

*“For many women and girls, the threat looms largest where they should be safest. In their own homes... We know lockdowns and quarantines are essential to suppressing COVID-19. But they can trap women with abusive partners.”* UN Secretary-General António Guterres<sup>56</sup>

One of the major concerns that has emerged with the crisis is the surge of domestic violence globally, which disproportionately affects women and girls. Experts have characterized it as an “invisible, shadow or double pandemic” of domestic violence during the COVID-19 crisis as a “ticking time bomb” or a “perfect storm.”<sup>57</sup> The sudden forced cohabitation, economic distress and the general fear about COVID-19 have increased violence at home. Measures of temporary quarantine, lockdown and restriction of movement led to the inability of vulnerable or already affected persons to leave the place of stay, exposing them to the constant control and potential exploitation by abusers.<sup>58</sup> Isolation with the perpetrator also hinders the possibilities to seek help and report to the police, either by telephone or online. Domestic violence is among the recognized, well-documented push factors into trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Human trafficking and domestic violence can occur on a continuum of violence, and the dynamics involved in human trafficking are frequently interwoven with those of domestic violence.<sup>59</sup> The vast majority of VoTs experience multiple forms of abuse, such as domestic violence and sexual assault.<sup>60</sup> Experiences of domestic violence can further lead to a victim feeling the need to escape their home and communities, which may heighten their vulnerability to THB.<sup>61</sup> Furthermore, women and girls are more vulnerable to intimate partner trafficking when they are sexually exploited and trafficked by their own partner with whom they may be quarantined.<sup>62</sup>

Results from the surveys also confirmed a rise in domestic violence and other forms of exploitation and violence towards women, girl and boy survivors of trafficking in their households. In addition, VoTs and survivors of trafficking in situations of domestic violence experience

---

54 UN Women (2020). [COVID-19 and Ending Violence Against Women and Girls](#).

55 Wagner L. & Hoang T. (2020), [Aggravating circumstances: How coronavirus impacts human trafficking](#), p. 4.

56 Guterres, A. (2020), [Inter-Agency Statement on Violence against Women and Girls in the Context of COVID-19](#), 24 June 2020.

57 UN Women, [‘Press release: UN Women raises awareness of the shadow pandemic of violence against women during COVID-19’](#), 27 May 2020; also see Bro, A. & Bettinger-Lopez, C., [‘A Double Pandemic: Domestic Violence in the Age of COVID-19’](#), Council on Foreign Relations, 13 May 2020.

58 OHCHR (2020), [Joint statement by the Special Rapporteur and the EDVAW Platform of women’s rights mechanisms on COVID-19 and the increase in violence and discrimination against women](#), 14 July 2020.

59 Freedom Network (2015), [Brief on Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking](#). April 2015.

60 Center for Court Innovation (n.d.), [The Intersection of Domestic Violence, Sexual Assault, and Human Trafficking](#).

61 US Department of State (2009) [Trafficking in Persons Report 2009](#), p. 41.

62 NNEDV (2017), [The Intersections of Domestic Violence and Human Trafficking](#).

more difficulty in accessing support and protection from the police, healthcare and social services, which are strained by the impact of the pandemic. The COVID-19 related measures may also affect the availability of shelter facilities, depriving victims of domestic violence of necessary places of protection.<sup>63</sup>

*“Due to my financial situation, I have been tempted to re-enter prostitution! ... This is the first time I’ve contemplated going back to the “industry” that damaged me immeasurably!”* Female survivor from the United Kingdom

Another aspect of vulnerability to THB is related to the role of women and girls within the family.<sup>64</sup> In some countries, poorer health and risks to wellbeing and safety of women and girls are linked to their prioritization of the needs of their family members over their own.<sup>65</sup> In addition, increased economic insecurity, insufficient state financial assistance and lack of social protections during and after the COVID-19 pandemic, facilitate the vulnerability of women and girls to THB. This is particularly applicable to women from marginalized and already vulnerable communities. Women engaged in informal work may experience further exacerbation of their vulnerability<sup>66</sup> due to the economic consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, reports suggest that some landlords are beginning to demand sex instead of rent from their female tenants in the face of job cuts and a potential housing crisis.<sup>67</sup>

The pandemic highlights that the dynamics of trafficking for sexual exploitation, particularly impacting women and children, are currently shifting from the more traditional forms of exploitation to various forms of trafficking

online. Some evidence of trafficking for the purpose of production of pornography, especially CSAM, has already been reported in the media.<sup>68</sup> The pandemic has led to a significant overall increase in demand for pornography and live streaming in the countries affected by lockdown measures, and the combination of push factors and vulnerabilities has resulted in the exploitation of women and children in the online sex industry.<sup>69</sup>

*“Yes, frontline services should get in touch with those affected and make exit offers. Hotels affected by the closure due to Corona could be rented cheaply by responsible authorities in cities and made available to victims of human trafficking during the Corona pandemic.”* Female survivor from Germany

*“What stood out most in the pandemic was the isolation of victims of prostitution and their inability to get help.”* Frontline stakeholder from France

The COVID-19 pandemic also has immediate and serious implications for women in the sex industry.<sup>70</sup> In countries where prostitution is legal, the temporary closure of the sex trade is likely to drive it underground, increasing the risk for affected women of being abused and trafficked or put at risk of contracting the virus. In these countries, while a few women may be entitled to state social support, this does not apply to most domestic and migrant women in the sex industry.<sup>71</sup> In other parts of the world, restrictions of movement and economic hardship are forcing women into the sex industry, where they may engage in riskier behavior to ensure food and shelter for themselves and their families, including lowering prices and engaging with potentially infected buyers.<sup>72</sup>

---

63 Fraser, E. (2020), [Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Violence against Women and Girls](#), VAWG Helpdesk Research Report No. 284.

64 OHCHR (2020), [Joint statement by the Special Rapporteur and the EDVAW Platform of women’s rights mechanisms on COVID-19 and the increase in violence and discrimination against women](#), 14 July 2020.

65 Wagner L. & Hoang T. (2020), [Aggravating circumstances: How coronavirus impacts human trafficking](#).

66 FAO (2020), [Impact of COVID-19 on informal workers](#), 7 April 2020.

67 Milne, A., [‘I had no choice’: Sex for rent rises with coronavirus poverty](#), Thomson Reuters Foundation, 21 May 2020.

68 Kara, S. (2020), [‘How traffickers exploit the covid-19 pandemic.’](#)

69 Radoini, A., [‘Cyber-crime during the COVID-19 Pandemic’](#), UN Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute, 11 May 2020.

70 Farley, M., (2020), [‘Prostitution, the Sex Trade, and the COVID-19 Pandemic’](#), Logos. Spring 2020.

71 Schaps, K., [‘Dutch sex workers risk trafficking and abuse as coronavirus bites’](#), Reuters, 19 March 2020.

72 Fraser, E. (2020), [Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Violence against Women and Girls](#), VAWG Helpdesk Research Report No. 284, p. 8.

## C. CHILDREN AND THEIR SPECIFIC VULNERABILITIES

*“Poverty and hunger, child labour, child marriages, child slavery, child trafficking and children on the move will likely increase during and after COVID-19.”* Joint Statement by Laureates & Leaders for Children<sup>73</sup>

The consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic are affecting and will continue to affect children worldwide due to the economic downturn, the negative impact on their health and development, the worsening of the access to education and the effect on child safety.<sup>74</sup> The COVID-19 pandemic is exacerbating vulnerabilities of children to THB due to school closures, increases in domestic violence and economic insecurity of households, as well as children’s increased time spent online. Another risk to children relates to encountering child sexual abuse material (CSAM) online.<sup>75</sup> As restrictions are lifted, children may be trafficked, forced out of school and into labour, bearing the burden of sustaining their families.<sup>76</sup> According to the survey findings, children who are victims of abuse, street children, stateless children, internally displaced or undocumented children and unaccompanied children are particularly vulnerable to THB. This is corroborated by the United Nations Sustainable Development Group Policy Brief on The Impact of COVID-19 on children, which reported on increased risks of sexual exploitation of children living in camps for refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons.<sup>77</sup>

The economic crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic led to an increased risk for girls from poor and rural areas in Africa and Asia of dropping out of school and ending up in forced marriages and forced pregnancies.<sup>78</sup> Children who are affected by the pandemic and drop out of school not only have a higher risk of child marriage and child labour, but the lack of educational opportunities will impact their development potential, which may heighten their vulnerability to exploitation and THB in the long-term.<sup>79</sup> For instance, 2.3 million children in the Sahel region will need assistance this year,<sup>80</sup> and for the first time since 2000 the number of child workers worldwide is expected to increase.<sup>81</sup>

The increased demand for CSAM is exacerbating the sexual exploitation of children. During the period of emergency measures, there have been an increased number of reports of child abuse, including new ways to sexually exploit and abuse children, such as live-streaming child sexual abuse or the establishment of “delivery” or “drive-thru services.”<sup>82</sup> Isolation with potential perpetrators can be an additional risk factor for children to become VoTs, especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

## D. GROWTH OF THB CRIME IN CYBERSPACE

According to data presented by Europol, the COVID-19 pandemic had the most significant impact on cybercrimes compared to other forms of criminal activities. There is evidence that some people in the sex industry moved their operations online due to lockdown measures.<sup>83</sup> Some anecdotal evidence suggest that some

73 Laureates & Leaders for Children (2020), [Joint Statement](#).

74 UN Sustainable Development Group (2020), [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on children](#), 15 April 2020.

75 EUROPOL (2020), [Exploiting Isolation: Offenders and victims of online child sexual abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic](#), 19 June 2020.

76 Laureates & Leaders for Children (2020), [Joint Statement](#).

77 UN Sustainable Development Group (2020), [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on children](#), 15 April 2020.

78 Wagner L. & Hoang T. (2020), [Aggravating circumstances: How coronavirus impacts human trafficking](#), pp. 4-5. See also Carvalho, R., “‘Children in a dog cage’: how coronavirus puts Asia’s most vulnerable at greater risk of homelessness, human trafficking,” South China Morning Post, 5 April 2020; also see: Muswii, E., ‘[Crisis as 4,000 school girls impregnated in Machakos in the last 4 months alone](#)’, Citizen Digital, 17 June 2020.

79 UN Sustainable Development Group (2020), [Policy Brief: The Impact of COVID-19 on children](#), 15 April 2020.

80 UNICEF, ‘[2,3 millions d’enfants auront besoin de protection dans la région du Sahel central en 2020, soit plus de 80 % en un an](#)’, 22 May 2020.

81 ILO, ‘[COVID-19 may push millions more children into child labour – ILO and UNICEF](#)’, 2 June 2020.

82 UN News, ‘[COVID-19 crisis putting human trafficking victims at risk of further exploitation, experts warn](#)’, 6 May 2020.

83 Partington, M. & Shehadi, S., ‘[Coronavirus: Offline sex workers forced to start again online](#)’, BBC, 7 April 2020.

forms of webcam sex trafficking also appear to be increasing.<sup>84</sup> The shift towards the Internet is closely linked to additional privacy risks for the individuals concerned, making them more vulnerable to blackmail and further exploitation.

Additionally, remote working amid the coronavirus outbreak gives abusers new ways to target people online<sup>85</sup> to both generate demand and to groom vulnerable women and children.<sup>86</sup> This is supported by the survey results, demonstrating that survivors have been targeted during COVID-19 pandemic by traffickers, mostly online.

Moreover, there are reports of increased grooming and exploitation of children online through gaming sites and social media platforms by sexual predators during the emergency measures, as children have to stay home and the demand for pornography has risen.<sup>87</sup> International and national law enforcement agencies, including Europol and the United States Federal Bureau of Investigation, are warning about the increasing risk of sexual exploitation on the Internet and signs of child abuse or child trafficking.<sup>88</sup> Available information indicates a growth of demand for CSAM and growth of CSAM and online exploitation, especially through the use of livestreams since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic.<sup>89</sup> Technology companies using automated tools to detect child abuse content based on previously categorized material are struggling to identify new uncategorized data and are further constrained by the impact of the pandemic due to lack of capacity. At the same

time, distributors of CSAM are constantly developing sophisticated, cross-platform strategies in coded language to evade detection, and using popular platforms to attract audiences, diverting interested consumers to private channels for access to the material.<sup>90</sup> In this regard, Australian authorities reported the identification of an online grooming manual shared by perpetrators.<sup>91</sup> A number of European countries reported an increase in reports of online CSAM during the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as attempts to access illegal materials online.<sup>92</sup> At the same time, other regions also recorded an increase of these indicators.<sup>93</sup> In addition, Europol reported on conversations in online forums (including those in the DarkWeb) on increased availability of children online during the COVID-19 pandemic due to isolation, unsupervised Internet access, as well as more time for offenders to download and trade CSAM as many are teleworking or spending more time at home due to restriction of movement.<sup>94</sup> According to the Survey, 10 per cent of the survivor respondents who have children reported that during the COVID-19 pandemic, their child was targeted with offers of employment or solicitation of their images.

## E. CROSS-LINKAGES BETWEEN MIGRATION AND THB

*“Step up labour inspections to check working conditions and work permits. Simultaneously look over the system for applying for residence permit for labour and ensure it is user-friendly and relevant information reaches*

---

84 Allen, C., **‘The Role of the Internet on Sex Trafficking’**, International Observatory Human Rights, 7 March 2019.; See Mendoza, M., **‘AP Exclusive: Big child webcam sex bust reveals rising abuse’**, Associated Press, 9 May 2017.; See also Sells, H., **‘Traffickers Are Not Shut Down’: Congressman Warns of Risk to Children & Other Victims’**, CBN NEWS, 28 April 2020.

85 Davies, S., **‘Risk of online sex trolling rises as coronavirus prompts home working’**, Thomson Reuters Foundation, 18 March 2020.

86 *Ibid*

87 Bowles, N. & Keller, M. H., **‘Video Games and Online Chats Are ‘Hunting Grounds’ for Sexual Predators’**, New York Times, 7 December 2019.

88 See Europol(2020), **Exploiting Isolation: Offenders and victims of online child sexual abuse during the COVID-19 pandemic**, 19 June 2020.; Europol (2020), **Pandemic Profiteering: How Criminals Exploit the COVID-19 Crisis**, 27 March 2020; See also Federal Bureau of Investigation (2020), **School Closings Due to COVID-19 Present Potential for Increased Risk of Child Exploitation**, 23 March 2020.

89 *Ibid*.

90 Solon, O., **‘Child sexual abuse images and online exploitation surge during pandemic’**, NBC NEWS, 23 April 2020.

91 Davey, M., **‘Child abuse predator ‘handbook’ lists ways to target children during coronavirus lockdown’**, The Guardian, 13 May 2020.

92 Wagner L. & Hoang T. (2020), **Aggravating circumstances: How coronavirus impacts human trafficking**, p.4

93 Kamenetz, A., **‘Child Sexual Abuse Reports Are On The Rise Amid Lockdown Orders’**, NPR, 28 April 2020.

94 Europol (2020), **Catching the virus cybercrime, disinformation and the COVID-19 pandemic**, pp. 9-11.

*the employee applicant.*” Frontline stakeholder from Germany

The survey results demonstrate that migrants have been identified as one of the main at-risk groups to THB during and after the COVID-19 pandemic. This must be considered against the background of available evidence that groups, such as migrant women, are already the majority of identified VoTs. The impact of travel restrictions on migrants is likely to increase their vulnerability to THB due to disruption in travel plans or loss of income. According to UNODC, the combination of a global economic downturn and tightened migration restrictions creates a tension between the increased interest of potential migrants to migrate and limited opportunities for regular migration, which heightens the risks of THB.<sup>95</sup> At the same time, the trafficking of people within the territory of a country is becoming a lucrative business, as national measures such as lockdowns, are in place.<sup>96</sup>

Specific challenges have arisen from the migration policies implemented by various countries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Border restrictions have impacted international mobility and migrants’ ability to return home or to take employment offers, including those that are of a recurrent seasonal nature. According to UN Women, the travel restrictions may lead to the exacerbation of already difficult work and living conditions, especially for women migrants in general.<sup>97</sup> As a result, many migrants, in particular women, were left stranded and availed themselves of repatriation efforts put in place by their countries of origin.<sup>98</sup> Uncertainty regarding international travel and reopening of borders poses great threats for migrants whose economic well-being

and physical safety may be dependent on crossing borders and makes them highly vulnerable to THB.<sup>99</sup>

*“Follow Portugal’s example and make all [VoTs] citizens in the interim, to ensure equality of access to health care and payments.”* Male survivor from Ireland

Following the onset of the pandemic and the ensuing border closures, access to asylum and migration procedures was *de-facto* or *de-jure* impacted in many countries. While some countries have maintained the pre-registration or registration of asylum-seekers, in many countries, restrictions on access to the territory were applied to those seeking asylum. In others, due to the physical closure of asylum offices, new asylum claims could not be filed, and existing claims could not be further processed. In some countries, migrants and refugees awaiting decisions on their immigration claims are held in unsanitary and overcrowded reception and administrative centers.<sup>100</sup> Due to the pandemic, access to these as well as to other detention facilities is limited for NGOs conducting monitoring, which severely hinders the proper identification of VoTs. Moreover, some VoTs may not seek medical or social assistance for fear of administrative detention due to their irregular migration status.

The United Nations Network on Migration expressed concerns that in response to the pandemic some countries continue to carry out forced returns and “collective expulsions, such as arbitrary pushbacks of migrants and asylum-seekers at borders.”<sup>101</sup> These may violate the principle of non-refoulement and disregard returning migrants and asylum-seekers to places where their life, safety or human rights are threatened, increasing their

---

95 UNODC (2020), [How COVID-19 Restrictions And The Economic Consequences Are Likely To Impact Migrant Smuggling And Cross-Border Trafficking In Persons To Europe And North America](#), p. 7.

96 Diagne, C. A. B. & Mbaye, A. A., [‘Sauver l’économie informelle face au COVID-19 en Afrique de l’Ouest’](#), The Conversation, 7 May 2020.

97 This is one of the findings of a rapid assessment of the impact of COVID-19 on migrant workers in Asia conducted by UN Women. The publication will be forthcoming.

98 Kyzy, A. U., [‘Coronavirus Exposes Central Asian Migrants’ Vulnerability’](#), The Diplomat, 10 April 2020.

99 Bauloz, C. & McAuliffe, M., [‘The coronavirus pandemic could be devastating for the world’s migrants’](#), World Economic Forum, 6 April 2020; UN Women (2020), [Guidance note: Addressing the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on women migrant workers](#).

100 Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, [‘US: Migrants “held for processing” should be released from COVID-19 high-risk detention centres’](#), 27 April 2020.

101 UN Network on Migration (2020), [Statement: Forced returns of migrants must be suspended in times of COVID-19](#), 13 May 2020.



vulnerability to THB. Furthermore, foreign victims and survivors of trafficking may be prevented from returning to their country of origin or experience delays due to closed borders, interrupted long-distance transport and unavailability of governmental agencies and service providers in the country of return.

Asylum seeking women and girls were at particular risk of violence, trafficking and exploitation in the weeks following the lockdown as they became deprived of essential services for victims of sexual violence and other forms of gender-based violence that was available in refugee camps before COVID-19. In some regions, fears of COVID-19 contagion in camps were fueled by criminals, such as migrant smugglers, attempting to boost demand for their services.<sup>102</sup> Moreover, the living conditions of people in refugee camps and similar facilities are alarming for many reasons, including the risk of contracting COVID-19 and being subjected to violence.<sup>103</sup> The situation could further deteriorate in some places in the global south as the winter season approaches,<sup>104</sup> which could lead to an increase in demand for smuggling services, thereby increasing the vulnerability to THB of those using these services.

Although some countries automatically extended the residence permits of migrants on their territory for the duration of the health emergency, this was not the case everywhere. As a consequence, many migrant workers have become undocumented and may have lost their jobs, and others may be forced to continue working without adequate preventive measures.<sup>105</sup> This

particularly impacted workers in informal and precarious employment conditions, who feared losing their sources of livelihood. For instance, women and especially young female adults, who make up a large proportion of migrant domestic workers,<sup>106</sup> are increasingly at risk of being exploited by employers who insist that they work on days off and threaten them with dismissal in case of non-compliance.<sup>107</sup> For example, in Europe, many female domestic workers from Romania and Moldova have been dismissed and left in the street, homeless and destitute, placing them at immediate risk of THB and sexual exploitation.<sup>108</sup> In addition, IOM reports that as a result of loss or reduction of migrants' income in Russia and Central Asia, some may be forced into the shadow economy or other exploitative employment.<sup>109</sup> In particular, among the most vulnerable groups are undocumented women, asylum seeking women, women victims of intimate partner violence with legal dependency on their spouses, live-in domestic workers and VoTs at risk of re-trafficking and/or loss of their protection status. Migrants suffer from lack of access to legal, medical and social services. In some countries, these developments are worsened by rising anti-migrant tensions, leading to the banning of migrants from accessing local public health facilities and, thus, putting them in an even more vulnerable situation.<sup>110</sup> According to information shared by the European Network of Migrant Women, for migrant women, in particular, this has led to the restrictions on already limited women's health services including access to maternity care and specialist services for survivors of sexual violence, sexual exploitation and female genital mutilation.<sup>111</sup>

---

102 INTERPOL (2020), [COVID-19 impact on migrant smuggling and human trafficking](#), 11 June 2020.

103 UNHCR, ['Urban refugees struggling to survive as economic impact of COVID-19 worsens in East, Horn and Great Lakes of Africa'](#), 26 May 2020.; See also Fraser, E. (2020), [Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Violence against Women and Girls](#), VAWG Helpdesk Research Report No. 284, p. 9.

104 UNHCR, ['Southern Hemisphere winter intensifies hardship for displaced Venezuelans'](#), 29 May 2020.

105 La Strada International (2020), The impact of COVID-19 on the protection of rights of trafficked and exploited persons. ; UNHCR, ['Urban refugees struggling to survive as economic impact of COVID-19 worsens in East, Horn and Great Lakes of Africa'](#), 26 May 2020.

106 Vidal, E. M., ['Can data help improve migrant domestic workers' lives?'](#), Migration Data Portal, 3 September 2019.

107 Fraser, E. (2020), [Impact of COVID-19 Pandemic on Violence against Women and Girls](#), VAWG Helpdesk Research Report No. 284, p. 9.

108 [Unpublished report](#) from European Network of Migrant Women's member NGO Association for the Contemporary Society Moldova

109 IOM, ['Clear and Present Crisis' in Russian Federation and Central Asia – IOM Launches Urgent Appeal'](#), 15 May 2020.

110 Kzy, A. U., ['Coronavirus Exposes Central Asian Migrants' Vulnerability'](#), The Diplomat, 10 April 2020. ; See also Sanderson, S., ['Bosnian minister proposes deportation and incarceration of migrants'](#), [InfoMigrants, 24 April 2020](#).

111 See, [European Network of Migrant Women](#).

The pandemic has also heavily affected the amount of remittances. Usually, 200 million migrant workers in 40 developed countries send money home to support 800 million relatives in 125 developing countries, especially those living in rural areas and dependent on these transfers. While in 2019, according to the World Bank, remittances to low – and middle-income countries reached a record level of USD 554 billion, this year's cross-border remittances will shrink by 20 per cent, or USD 110 billion, possibly pushing tens of millions below the poverty line and increasing their vulnerability to THB.<sup>112</sup>

## F. OTHER EMERGING ISSUES

Trafficking in persons is a serious crime, which undermines human rights. Governments have started to release some prisoners and immigrant detainees because

of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the number of releases has varied considerably across countries. While a few countries are releasing tens of thousands of prisoners, others have been slower to do so. For example, the United Kingdom had plans to release up to 4,000 people, 5 per cent of the prison population.<sup>113</sup> Convicted traffickers in some countries are being granted early, temporary or conditional release from prison due to the COVID-19 pandemic, without notifying their victims or survivors of trafficking, or making an assessment of their safety and protection needs. A zero-tolerance policy should be implemented in THB cases, especially for the purpose of sexual exploitation, as stated by the UN Secretary-General António Guterres: “we will not tolerate anyone committing or condoning sexual exploitation and abuse. Let us make zero tolerance a reality.”<sup>114</sup>

---

112 UN News, [‘Coronavirus a challenge, and opportunity, to fix remittances system than funnels billions home from abroad’](#), 2 June 2020.

113 Oberman, K. , [‘COVID-19 prisoner releases are not a matter of mercy, but of justice’](#), World Economic Forum, 27 April 2020.

114 UN (n.d.), [Preventing Sexual Exploitation and abuse](#).

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS THE THB TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

### A. STRENGTHEN IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNATIONAL LEGAL FRAMEWORKS, REGIONAL INSTRUMENTS AND NATIONAL LEGISLATION TO ADDRESS THE THB TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.

- a. A national legal framework is fundamental to effectively address the immediate and long-term THB impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. States that have not ratified, signed and acceded to the Palermo Protocol and incorporated its provisions into national anti-trafficking legislation should do so as a matter of priority.<sup>115</sup> Transnational Referral Mechanisms and robust anti-trafficking domestic legislation are essential for criminalization and prosecution of human trafficking crimes, ensuring assistance and support to victims, prevention efforts and fostering co-operation.
- b. It is essential for states to implement the provisions of other international laws and conventions, to which they are a party, such as the UN Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979), UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) (1989), and the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration (2018) and fully incorporate the language and goals of SDG target 5.2, 8.7 and 16.2 and prioritize their implementation.<sup>116</sup> In particular, implement the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (Palermo Protocol),
- c. With the increased regional mobility and potential growth of THB post pandemic, regional CTHB instruments should be implemented and, where necessary, strengthened to foster co-ordination and response to CTHB.<sup>117</sup>
- d. During the pandemic online grooming, recruitment and exploitation has increased, making women and children especially vulnerable to online sexual exploitation. States should ensure that they have anti-trafficking legislation to address THB in cyberspace, and that it reflects gender and age specificity of online crimes related to THB. It is also important that relevant authorities are able to understand and use such legislation.

---

115 The [Palermo Protocol](#) has been ratified by 176 countries

116 SDG 5.2 (Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation, highlighting trafficking and sexual exploitation as clear examples of gender-based violence), 8.7 (Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms), 16.2 (End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children and 16.2.2 calls upon member states to measure the number of victims of human trafficking per 100,000 population by sex, age and form of exploitation).

117 Regional instruments include such as European Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms (1950), American Convention on Human Rights (1969), The African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child (1999), Bangkok Declaration on Irregular/Undocumented Migration (1999), Economic Community of West African States Declaration on the Fight against Trafficking in Persons (2001), Brussels Declaration on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings (2002), Nasonini Declaration on Regional Security (2002), Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (2003), Association of Southeast Asian Nations Declaration against Trafficking in Persons particularly Women and Children (2004), Arab Charter on Human Rights (2004), Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005), South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation Convention on Preventing and Combating Trafficking in Women and Children for Prostitution (2007).

## **B. DEVELOP AND/OR IMPLEMENT OF NRMS OR EQUIVALENT SYSTEMS TO ADDRESS THE THB TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

- a. NRMs or equivalent systems are essential to the functioning of anti-trafficking frameworks nationally, especially during states of emergency. NRMs or equivalent systems should be grounded in a human rights, non-discriminatory, gender-sensitive, trauma-informed and victim and survivor-centered approach and implemented in all states to include, at minimum, the following: an independent national rapporteur and a national co-ordinator, interagency councils, multi-disciplinary co-operation across government institutions and with civil society,<sup>118</sup> and survivor advisory councils. NRMs should include specialized NRMs for children.
- b. Furthermore, an independent national rapporteur should monitor and report on the implementation of state obligations regarding CTHB during states of emergency.
- c. Ensure effective functioning of NRMs and equivalent systems as overall states with NRMs or equivalent systems tend to have more accessible rehabilitation and reintegration services for VoTs during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- d. NRMs or equivalent systems should be updated to respond to emerging THB trends during the COVID-19 pandemic, such as an increase of THB in cyberspace.
- e. States should also incorporate the use of technology throughout NRMs, to facilitate the accessibility of services to VoTs and survivors of trafficking on online platforms during the COVID-19 pandemic, as was demonstrated in a number of positive examples reported within the survey. In order to do this, VoTs and survivors need to have free access to phone lines and online technologies.

## **C. DEVELOP AND/OR UPDATE OF NATIONAL STRATEGIES AND NAPS TO CTHB TO ADDRESS THE THB TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC.**

- a. States should develop or update their National Strategies and NAPS to CTHB to address the emerging COVID-19 trends and dynamics. This should include the development of policy and activities around: (1) THB in cyberspace, especially of women and children; (2) prevention and addressing root causes of trafficking of women and children; (3) engagement of local communities in CTHB; (4) healthcare and educational institution protocols on identification and referral of VoTs; and (5) identification and prevention of THB of at-risk groups post-COVID-19 pandemic.
- b. Furthermore, states should include the development of a State of Emergency National Protocol (SENP) to CTHB into the NAPS, as well as ensure that CTHB is also included in the national and local socio-economic recovery plans post pandemic. The SENP should define the national CTHB co-ordination mechanism during a state of emergency and include clear delineation of responsibilities and procedures. The SENP should:
  - i. Strengthen proactive identification of VoTs in emergency situations through a multi-disciplinary approach and use of new technologies, including during the adoption of measures of self-isolation and social distancing, to CTHB in cyberspace;
  - ii. Ensure that specific emergency-related vulnerabilities to THB and needs of women and girls are addressed;
  - iii. Identify and provide alternate accommodations for VoTs in emergency situations learning from good practices such as the

---

118 ODIHR (2004), [National Referral Mechanisms – Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons: A Practical Handbook](#).

repurposing of empty hotels for sheltering survivors of violence and trafficking;

- iv. Ensure the accessibility of personal protective equipment for the personnel of organizations and facilities providing services to VoTs and to VoTs who are receiving services. Prioritize the diagnostic tests of VoTs during pandemics to expedite their ability to access accommodation and other essential services; and
- v. Conduct training courses for all governmental and non-governmental stakeholders providing services to VoTs on distance working with at-risk groups during a state of emergency.

#### **D. STRENGTHEN IDENTIFICATION OF VOTS TO ADDRESS THE TRENDS AND CONSEQUENCES OF THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

- a. Strengthen the proactive identification of VoTs, women, men, girls and boys, during the COVID-19 pandemic and after, by adopting responses to changes in operational capacity to address THB emerging trends, especially in cyberspace.
- b. Prioritize the detection and identification of VoTs by law enforcement and the investigations of criminal networks engaged in THB during and post pandemic. Ensure adequate resourcing of specialized anti-trafficking law enforcement units to prevent the increase of the THB during and after the pandemic.
- c. Strengthen proactive identification among at-risk groups, including marginalized communities, ethnic and racial minorities and other vulnerable populations (including migrants with irregular status, refugees, internally displaced people and people with disabilities), as they may be particularly vulnerable to THB during and after the pandemic.
- d. Continue identification procedures of VoTs in international protection and forced return

procedures, and in reception centres and detention facilities, as they may be particularly vulnerable to THB during and after COVID-19 pandemic.

- e. Ensure that statutory identification procedures, including timelines, are adhered to during and immediately after the COVID-19 pandemic, as prescribed by national regulations.
- f. Institute identification and referral protocols in healthcare institutions, as healthcare workers may be the only ones to come into contact with VoTs during pandemics or states of emergency.
- g. Ensure availability of exit services from the sex industry and ensure those who have exited have all the support required to not be forced into the industry due to lack of choices.

#### **E. MAKE SERVICES ACCESSIBLE TO VOTS AND SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING DURING AND POST COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

- a. Declare services for VoT essential during and after the pandemic or any other crisis or state of emergency.
- b. Provide uninterrupted referral and access to NRMs and equivalent systems to all VoTs and survivors of trafficking. Inform VoTs and survivors of trafficking of any changes to access of services, including availability of remote services, due to a state of emergency such as the COVID-19 pandemic. For countries without NRMs or equivalent systems, ensure these are put in place as soon as possible and remain functional during emergencies.
- c. Provide a reflection and recovery period to VoTs and survivors of trafficking and provision of rehabilitation services during and after the pandemic regardless of their decision to co-operate with law enforcement agencies, as an essential part of national anti-trafficking legislation and to prevent an onward cycle of re-trafficking and vulnerability to other forms of exploitation during and after the pandemic.

- d. Ensure provision of safe single-sex accommodation to both VoTs and survivors of trafficking, including to those with disabilities, during states of emergency, as well as accommodation that fits the needs of women with children. Shelters should attempt to meet the social distancing requirements and both beneficiaries and staff should have access to personal protective equipment.
  - e. Provide access to healthcare during the COVID-19 pandemic or any other pandemic to VoTs and survivors of trafficking and consider such provision regardless of their migration status and without risk of administrative detention or deportation.
  - f. Support the provision of psychological assistance to VoTs and survivors of trafficking, taking into account gender-specific needs. This should include addressing PTSD symptoms and other psychological trauma resulting from isolation and other COVID-19 related factors.
  - g. Provide substance dependency rehabilitation services to VoTs and survivors of trafficking to prevent cycles of exploitation and re-trafficking during and after COVID-19 pandemic.
  - h. Extend the duration of mandated assistance and services in NRM and equivalent systems for VoTs and survivors of trafficking for the period of implementation of preventive measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic.
  - i. Provide Internet access and informational services in refugee camps and similar facilities to ensure reporting and support for VoTs during and post pandemic.
  - j. Assess the new and additional needs of VoTs and survivors of trafficking post pandemic and adjust provision of assistance and services accordingly.
  - k. Ensure services provided online, as well as hot-lines, are free and accessible to all VoTs.
- F. PROVIDE ACCESS TO REMEDIES INCLUDING JUSTICE AND INFORMATION**
- a. Ensure equal access to fair, timely and effective justice for VoTs and survivors of trafficking. This should include facilitating and prioritizing the functioning of justice services through online means, wherever possible, during emergency situations including pandemics.
  - b. Inform VoTs and survivors of trafficking in a timely manner, in a language they understand, of any changes in processes, delays or postponements in their civil, administrative or criminal justice procedures.
  - c. Ensure that VoTs and survivors of trafficking, as well as migrants, are not subjected to criminal and/or administrative penalties for violation of migration legislation especially during the period of the pandemic.
  - d. Ensure temporary residence permits to VoTs and survivors of trafficking, who are in the process of return to their country of origin during the period of implementation of restrictions on cross-border movement related to the pandemic.
  - e. Prioritize financial investigations and confiscation of assets in THB cases and provision of easily accessible compensation to VoTs and survivors of trafficking during and after the pandemic.<sup>119</sup> Patterns of reintroduction of proceeds into the financial system may be used by law enforcement to identify perpetrators and increase the effectiveness of prosecutions. This would serve as a deterrent to the crime of THB and prevent vulnerability of VoTs to re-trafficking due the COVID-19 related economic downturn, and most importantly

---

119 Compensation entails the reimbursement of material and immaterial damages a trafficked person has suffered. ODIHR (2008), [Compensation for Trafficked and Exploited Persons in the OSCE Region](#).

ensure remedies, including justice in their cases. Adequate financial support should be provided to VoTs and survivors of trafficking to enable their full recovery, including from compensation from confiscated assets from traffickers or national funds. Attention should also be given to addressing the increasing use of cryptocurrencies in transactions related to THB.

- f. Ensure there are no provisions for early, temporary or conditional release of convicted traffickers due to the COVID-19 pandemic as it results in impunity for the trafficking crime and may result in protection issues to VoTs and survivors of trafficking.
- g. Ensure criminal compensation procedures and processes continue to operate and are adapted to provide victims with continued access to state and other forms of reparation and compensation during and post COVID-19 pandemic.

## **G. ADDRESS SPECIFIC NEEDS OF WOMEN AND GIRLS**

- a. Address gender specific dynamics of THB, its consequences, harms and recovery processes. As approximately three-fourths of all detected trafficking victims are women and girls, all aspects of the NRMs should therefore be gender specific and tailored. In particular, states should fully recognize the acute vulnerabilities and specific needs of trafficked women and girls during and post pandemic.
- b. Develop standard operating procedures and training for all frontline stakeholders for states of emergency to address factors such as implicit or explicit bias, prejudice, stigmatization, gender stereotypes based on cultural background, immigration status, involvement in the sex industry and other factors, which negatively impact the effectiveness of NRMs and equivalent systems, with a specific focus on women and girls trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

These biases should be addressed at all levels including by governmental organizations, inter-governmental organizations and NGOs.

- c. Consider that girls are particularly vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, both online and offline, and child marriage, when developing appropriate responses to mitigate and address their vulnerability during and post pandemic and by developing and implementing gender-sensitive capacity building anti-trafficking initiatives.
- d. Intensify the collaborative efforts by states, as well as international organizations and civil society groups and individuals, to eliminate THB and commercial sexual exploitation of women and girls worldwide as forms of gender-based violence and manifestations of gender inequality, as recognized in SDG 5.2 and exacerbated during and post pandemic.
- e. Prioritize the prosecution of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, both online and offline, taking into account the gender specific nature of sexual exploitation and the fact that two thirds of all profits from THB are derived from trafficking of women and girls for the purpose of sexual exploitation.<sup>120</sup> This would mitigate the potential increase of trafficking of women and girls during and after the COVID-19 pandemic including addressing the exacerbated gender vulnerabilities and inequalities that the pandemic has brought. Continue investigations and prosecutions of trafficking in human beings' cases, delayed or postponed due to COVID-19.
- f. Ensure identification and support for victims of gender-based persecution in asylum cases, including VoTs, during and post pandemic to mitigate their vulnerability to further exploitation and violence.
- g. Implement effective and impact-oriented gender-mainstreaming in all migration policies post

---

120 ILO, 'ILO says forced labour generates annual profits of US\$ 150 billion', 20 May 2014.

pandemic, as women and girls are particularly vulnerable to THB in the context of migration.

- h. Develop and implement gender-sensitive monitoring systems aimed at collecting information on new trends and challenges, dynamics, at risk groups, new needs of VoTs and survivors of trafficking and organizations working with them. This would contribute to mitigating the long-term consequences of the pandemic.

## H. ADDRESS SPECIFIC NEEDS OF CHILDREN

- a. Mitigate the exacerbated vulnerabilities of children to THB resulting from the pandemic and the economic downturn, including potential decreases in access to child protection systems, public healthcare, educational opportunities, forced child marriages, as well as the experience and exposure to domestic violence.
- b. Delegate monitoring of child protection systems, with a focus on emerging pandemic related challenges, to an appropriate national government agency, ombudsperson for children or other independent human rights institution, including data collection to identify at-risk groups and develop specific measures and action plans aimed at mitigating these risks.
- c. Develop, strengthen or implement NRMs for children to address the special needs of trafficked children and, to the extent possible, take into account the best interest of the child for all child VoTs and survivors of trafficking during the COVID-19 pandemic and afterwards.<sup>121</sup>
- d. Provide specialized shelter accommodation or foster care for child VoTs and at-risk children during the COVID-19 pandemic and afterwards.<sup>122</sup>
- e. Ensure uninterrupted operability of national child protection systems during and after the

pandemic, with measures to prevent, identify and protect at-risk children including victims of abuse, migrant children, refugees, unaccompanied and internally displaced children, street children, stateless children and undocumented children, as they are an at-risk group.

- f. Address vulnerability of children to trafficking for the purpose of organ removal and during and post pandemic, as this form of THB may be exacerbated. Also address possible increased vulnerability of children to illegal adoption, which in some cases may result in a child becoming a VoT.
- g. Ensure that provision of legal guardians to children, especially VoTs, is not impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic and that there are no changes in procedure, delays or postponements.
- h. Consider providing proactive identification of children, whose parents are migrants with irregular status or VoTs, to mitigate their exacerbated vulnerability to THB during the COVID-19 pandemic and afterwards.
- i. Develop and implement procedures for return of child VoTs<sup>123</sup>, based on human rights principles and taking into account the best interest of the child determination, as well as for those whose parents are VoTs returning to the country of origin/citizenship after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- j. Conduct THB preventive activities and monitoring of children in institutional care facilities and foster care and provide for their uninterrupted basic needs, including healthcare and access to personal protective equipment.
- k. Develop or amend NAPs and strategies to address the exacerbation of risks of online sexual exploitation of children during and post pandemic.

121 UN General Assembly(1989), [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#). United Nations, Treaty Series, 1577(3).

122 Citrus Health Network, Inc. (n.d.), [CHANCE Program](#).

123 ODIHR (2014), [Guiding Principles on Human Rights in the Return of Trafficked Persons](#).



- l. Bolster proactive identification of child VoTs for the purpose of production of CSAM during the pandemic and afterwards using online technologies to detect and identify VoTs and traffickers, in partnerships between public and private sectors, to address pandemic-related increases of this crime.
- m. Enhance the investigation and prosecution of cases for production and distribution of CSAM through adequate resourcing and possible designation of specialized law enforcement units to address the increase of CSAM during the pandemic, and potentially afterwards, to take into account the increase in online exploitation due to the pandemic.
- n. Respond to the increase in online grooming and exploitation resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, develop and enhance age appropriate, online THB prevention tools (through social media, mobile applications, and/or including joint campaigns in collaboration with service providers) targeted at parents, educators, social service providers, and children and youth. These should have a special focus on signs of online grooming and trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and provide age-appropriate guidance to protect children from engaging in risky behavior online during the pandemic and afterwards. These may be developed through public/private partnership initiatives and governments should exchange good practices and share materials in this regard.
- o. Hold accountable online platforms, which facilitate THB or provide a venue for its occurrence.

## **I. SUPPORT AND BUILD THE CAPACITY OF BOTH GOVERNMENTAL AND NON-GOVERNMENTAL FRONTLINE STAKEHOLDERS**

- a. Provide adequate and sustained funding and support for anti-trafficking frontline non-governmental organizations to safeguard availability of all necessary services to VoTs and survivors of trafficking, as well as research, prevention

and awareness raising, and advocacy activities during and post pandemic.

- b. Consider providing capacity building and re-sourcing for online provision of support and services to VoTs and survivors of trafficking to both governmental and non-governmental frontline stakeholders.
- c. Provide additional resourcing for shelters to ensure their continued operationality and availability to VoTs and survivors of trafficking that takes into account safety concerns related to the pandemic, as well as for at-risk populations during and post-COVID-19. Shelters should take into account the specific needs of women, men, girls and boys and practice a culturally sensitive, trauma-informed, victim-centered and non-discriminatory approach towards their beneficiaries.

## **J. STRENGTHEN THB PREVENTION EFFORTS RELATED TO THE PANDEMIC**

- a. Raise awareness of legislators, policy makers, anti-trafficking stakeholders and civil society on current and emerging challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic.
- b. Ensure continued awareness raising and prevention campaigns targeted at the general population on THB and specific risks for women and men, boys and girls in the period of restrictive measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic, with a particular focus on increased risks for trafficking with the purpose of sexual and labour exploitation.
- c. Implement measures to support employers through training on recruitment and selection processes that prevent THB.
- d. Ensure that migrant populations are included in the national and regional post pandemic recovery measures, including economic measures.
- e. Provide single-sex services and accommodations for female refugees to prevent vulnerability

- to THB and other forms of sexual exploitation and violence during and after the pandemic, as well as adequate accommodation for women with children.
- f. Consider implementing special measures during the pandemic to disconnect migrant status, including undocumented status, from access to essential services, including health services, as it exacerbates migrants' vulnerability to THB.
  - g. Undertake research post pandemic to further identify emerging trends and dynamics, at-risk groups for THB and needs of VoTs and survivors of THB based on empirical data.
  - h. Implement measures to ensure zero discrimination and stigmatization of marginalized populations.

## **K. IMPLEMENT MEASURES TO REDUCE THB AFTER THE PANDEMIC**

- a. Address the demand for trafficking for labour exploitation through effective implementation of national labour legislation, and adopting measures such as ensuring safe and effective pathways to legal labour migration, strengthening and resourcing labour inspectorates, implementing penalties for unethical recruitment and labour exploitation and ensuring transparency in supply chains.
- b. Facilitate the full capacity, resourcing and work of labour inspectorates after the COVID-19 pandemic.
- c. Commit to development and implementation of public procurement regulations, which ensure that spending of public funds is untainted by trafficking for labour exploitation.
- d. Develop, strengthen and implement policy on supply chain management practices as businesses resume operations to ensure that THB or forced labour are eliminated in their operations, including awareness campaigns to promote ethical recruitment practices in the private sector and on employment recruitment and dangers of THB during and post-COVID-19 pandemic targeted at at-risk groups.
- e. Work with Internet service providers, credit-card companies, banks, etc. to prevent the use of the Internet for sexual exploitation of children, women and men and to disrupt traditional payment methods to reduce profitability resulting in decrease of both supply and demand; in this regard also address the emerging use of cryptocurrencies.
- f. Drawing from the prevention of violence field, incorporate work on changing harmful masculinities and social norms that promote the commodification and objectification of women and children and promote the idea of men's entitlements to women's bodies in order to reduce demand for trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation.
- g. Ensure compliance with the obligations under Article 9(5) of the Palermo Protocol to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation that lead to trafficking. In particular, the demand that fosters sexual exploitation should be targeted for prevention and criminal justice measures.
- h. Address the nexus between online violence, women's objectification in the media and its linkages to pornography, including trafficking for the purpose of pornography production and CSAM.

## ACRONYMS

CEDAW	The Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease 2019
CRC	The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
CSAM	Child sexual abuse material
CTHB	Combating Trafficking in Human Beings
EU	European Union
Europol	European Union Agency for Law Enforcement Cooperation
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FGM	Female genital mutilation
GRETA	Group of Experts on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings of the Council of Europe
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
INTERPOL	International Criminal Police Organisation
IOM	International Organization for Migration
NAPs	National Action Plans
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
ODIHR	Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
OSCE	Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe
Palermo Protocol	The Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children supplementing the 2000 Convention against Transnational Organized Crime
PTSD	Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SENP	State of Emergency National Protocol
THB	Trafficking in Human Beings
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UNICEF	United Nations International Children's Fund
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
UN Women	United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women
VoTs	Victims of Trafficking

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Best interests determination	A formal process with strict procedural safeguards designed to determine the child's best interest for particularly important decisions affecting the child.
Child	Any person under 18 years of age. <sup>124</sup>
Child sexual abuse material (CSAM)	Refers to materials depicting acts of sexual abuse and/or focusing on the genitalia of the child. <sup>125</sup> CSAM takes many forms including photos and videos chronicling sexual abuse, live-streaming videos of abuse on-demand, and other "forms of material representing child sex abuse and exploitation, such as audio files, written story lines, or other potential forms of recording." <sup>126</sup> There is a significant degree of overlap between the markets for CSAM and child sex trafficking; a trafficked child may be exploited not only for direct sale to purchasers, but may also be exploited through the online trade and sale of photos and videos of the child in sexual situations or being sexually abused. <sup>127</sup> CSAM can be used as a form of online marketing to advertise victims of child sex trafficking as "pimps use pornography, especially online, to sell trafficking victims to Johns." <sup>128</sup> While the CSAM market bolsters the demand for and tolerability of child sexual exploitation, including technology facilitated child sex trafficking, legislative and preventive efforts directed towards banning CSAM do not sufficiently encompass technology-facilitated child sex trafficking.
Country of destination	In the context of trafficking in human beings, this refers to the country where a trafficked person has been taken to or is being taken to for the purpose of her or his exploitation.
Country of origin	Country or countries of nationality or, for stateless persons, of former habitual residence. In certain instances, including, for example, under the Dublin Regulation, this may also refer to a country of transit.
Discrimination against girls and women	Means directly or indirectly treating girls and women differently from boys and men in a way that prevents them from enjoying their rights. Discrimination can be direct or indirect. Direct discrimination against girls and women is generally easier to recognize as the discrimination is quite obvious. For example, in some countries, women cannot legally own property; they are forbidden by law to take certain jobs; or the customs of a community may not permit girls to attend higher education. Indirect discrimination against girls and women can be difficult to recognize. It refers to situations that may appear to be unbiased but result in unequal treatment of girls and women. For example, a job for a police officer may have minimum height and weight criteria that women may find difficult to fulfill. As a result, women may be unable to become police officers. <sup>129</sup>

Female genital mutilation

Female genital mutilation (FGM) comprises all procedures that involve altering or injuring the female genitalia for non-medical reasons and is recognized internationally as a violation of the human rights, the health and the integrity of girls and women.<sup>130</sup> Female genital mutilations are a harmful practice that constitutes a serious threat to the health of women and girls, including their psychological, sexual and reproductive health, which can increase their vulnerability to HIV and may have adverse obstetric and prenatal outcomes, as well as fatal consequences for the mother and the newborn.<sup>131</sup>

Gender

Refers to the social attributes and opportunities associated with being male and female and the relationships between women and men and girls and boys, as well as the relations between women and those between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and are learned through socialization processes. They are context/ time-specific and changeable. Gender determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in responsibilities assigned, activities undertaken, access to and control over resources, as well as decision-making opportunities. Gender is part of the broader socio-cultural context. Other important criteria for socio-cultural analysis include class, race, poverty level, ethnic group and age.<sup>132</sup>

Gender equality  
(Equality between women and men)

Refers to the equal rights, responsibilities and opportunities of women and men and girls and boys. Equality does not mean that women and men will become the same but that women's and men's rights, responsibilities and opportunities will not depend on whether they are born male or female. Gender equality implies that the interests, needs and priorities of both women and men are taken into consideration, recognizing the diversity of different groups of women and men. Gender equality is not a women's issue but should concern and fully engage men, as well as women. Equality between women and men is seen both as a human rights issue and as a precondition for, and indicator of, sustainable people-centered development.<sup>133</sup>

Gender perspective

The term 'gender perspective' is a way of seeing or analyzing issues that looks at the impact of gender on people's opportunities, social roles and interactions. This way of seeing is what enables one to carry out gender analysis and subsequently to mainstream a gender perspective into any proposed program, policy or organization.<sup>134</sup>

Gender-based Violence (GBV)	Is an umbrella term for any harmful act that is perpetrated against a person's will and that is based on socially ascribed (gender) differences between females and males. The nature and extent of specific types of GBV vary across cultures, countries and regions. Examples include sexual violence, including sexual exploitation/abuse and forced prostitution; domestic violence; trafficking; forced/early marriage; harmful traditional practices such as female genital mutilation; honour killings; and widow inheritance. <sup>135</sup>
Human rights-based approach	<p>A conceptual framework that is normatively based on international human rights standards and that is operationally directed at promoting and protecting human rights. International protection actions are taken by the international community, on the basis of international law, to protect the fundamental rights of a specific category of persons located outside their countries of origin who lack the national protection of their own countries.</p> <p>A human rights-based approach to gender issues uncovers how human rights issues affect women and men differently and how power relations and gender-based discrimination affect the effective enjoyment of rights by all human beings.<sup>136</sup></p>
Informal sector	Refers to employment and production that takes place in small and/or unregistered enterprises. It includes self-employment in informal enterprises (small and unregistered enterprises) and wage employment in informal jobs (unregulated and unprotected jobs) for informal enterprises, formal enterprises, households or for no fixed employer. <sup>137</sup>
National Referral Mechanism	A co-operative framework within which state actors fulfil their obligations to protect and promote the human rights of trafficked persons by co-ordinating their efforts in a strategic partnership with civil society. <sup>138</sup>
Non-refoulement	Originally a concept under international (refugee) law, under which it is illegal for states to expel or return ("refouler") refugees who have a well-founded fear of persecution upon their return. The principle is part of customary international law and is, therefore, binding on all states whether or not they are parties to the UN Refugee Convention.
Potential victim of trafficking	A person who has not been exploited, but who, due to her or his vulnerable situation, may become a victim of trafficking. A person who manifests certain indicators that suggest they may be a victim of trafficking in human beings, but who has not been formally identified as such by the authorities, or who has declined to be formally identified as such.
Reflection / recovery period	Period of time granted to victims of THB to allow them to recover and escape the influence of the perpetrators of the crime, and to give them the opportunity to make an informed decision as to whether to co-operate with the competent authorities.

Refugee	A person who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, chooses to reside outside the country of her/his nationality or former habitual residence, and who is unable or unwilling to avail herself/himself of the protection of that country. <sup>139</sup>
Remedy	Encompasses both a substantive right to reparations, as well as the procedural rights necessary to access reparations. In substance, this means adequate reparations for the harms suffered, which may include restitution, compensation, recovery, satisfaction and guarantees of non-repetition. In procedural terms, it refers to access to a competent and independent authority in order to successfully obtain reparations. At a minimum, this includes: the provision of information concerning rights, the reparations available and the existence of and modalities for accessing reparation mechanisms; legal, medical, psychological, social, administrative and other assistance necessary to seek remedies; and a reflection and recovery period for the trafficked person, followed by the granting of residence status while the trafficked person seeks remedies. <sup>140</sup>
Return	In the context of trafficking in human beings, the term refers to the process of returning victims of trafficking from the country in which they were identified as trafficked persons to their country of origin. The process can be voluntary, forced and assisted or, alternatively, forced and not assisted. In this document, the term is used to describe the situation of victims of trafficking who are forced to return.
Returning state / country	A state that has returned or is in the process of returning a trafficked person from its territory back to the victim's country of origin.
Separated children	Children separated from both parents, or from their previous legal or customary primary caregiver, but not necessarily from their relatives. This can include children who are accompanied by adult family members other than their parents
Survivors of trafficking	A non-legal term for a person who has been able to exit and overcome their situation of trafficking. It does not connote a permanent status of victimhood, but that of survival. Survivors of trafficking know first-hand the human rights violations inherent in trafficking in human beings, and are of vital importance in informing effective anti-trafficking efforts. <sup>141</sup>
Trafficking in human beings, or trafficking	The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. <sup>142</sup>



Trafficking of children	The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation, even if this does not involve any threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, abduction, fraud, deception, the abuse of power or a position of vulnerability, or the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person. <sup>143</sup>
Transnational referral mechanism	The concept of a co-operative agreement for the cross-border comprehensive assistance and/or transfer of identified or potential trafficked persons, through which state actors of different countries fulfill their obligations to promote and protect the human rights of trafficked persons. <sup>144</sup>
Unaccompanied children	Children who have been separated from both their parents and relatives and are not being cared for by the adult or adults who bear legal or customary responsibility for doing so.
Victim of trafficking, trafficked person	For the purposes of this document, this refers to a person who is formally identified as a victim of trafficking (VoT), a potential VoT or a presumed VoT.
Violence against women	<p>Is any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or in private life. Violence against women shall be understood to encompass, but not be limited to, the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring in the family, including battering, sexual abuse of female children in the household, dowry-related violence, marital rape, FGM and other traditional practices harmful to women, intimate partner violence, non-spousal violence and violence related to exploitation;</li> <li>10. Physical, sexual and psychological violence occurring within the general community, including rape, sexual abuse, sexual harassment in public spaces and sexual harassment and intimidation at work, in educational institutions and elsewhere, trafficking in women and forced prostitution; and</li> <li>11. Physical, sexual and psychological violence perpetrated or condoned by the state, wherever it occurs.<sup>145</sup></li> </ol>

- 
- 124 See UN General Assembly (1989), [Convention on the Rights of the Child](#), 20 November 1989, Article 1.
- 125 [ECPAT Fact Sheet on Child Sexual Abuse Material](#).
- 126 [Terminology Guidelines for the Protection of Children from Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, Interagency Working Group on Sexual Exploitation of Children](#), Luxembourg, Jan. 28, 2016, K.1.iv, 59, supra note 1, at 39-40.
- 127 Michelle Lillie, [The Connection Between Sex Trafficking and Pornography](#), Human Trafficking Search.
- 128 Paula Sellars, [The Relationship Between Pornography, Trafficking, and the Sexual Abuse of Children](#), Two Minutes for Prevention series, Stewards of Children.
- 129 See UN Women (n.d.), [Gender Equality Glossary](#).
- 130 See UN (n.d.), [International Day of Zero Tolerance for Female Genital Mutilation](#), 6 February.
- 131 See Resolution adopted by the General Assembly on 20 December 2012 [on the report of the Third Committee (A/67/450 and Corr.1)] 67/146. Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations.
- 132 See definition of gender as defined by UN Women. UN Women (n.d.), [Concepts and definitions](#). See also UN General Assembly (2013), [Intensifying global efforts for the elimination of female genital mutilations](#), 5 March 2013, A/RES/67/146.
- 133 See UN Women (n.d.), [Gender Equality Glossary](#).
- 134 *Ibid.*
- 135 *Ibid.*
- 136 *Ibid.*
- 137 *Ibid.*
- 138 See the definition of national referral mechanism as defined in ODIHR (2004), [National Referral Mechanisms – Joining Efforts to Protect the Rights of Trafficked Persons: A Practical Handbook](#).
- 139 See Article 1A of [the Convention of 28 July 1951 relating to the status of refugees](#), as amended by the New York Protocol of 31 January 1967.
- 140 See the concept of remedies as defined in the Draft Basic Principles on the right to an effective remedy for trafficked persons, developed by the UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children, and presented by the Special Representative in her thematic report to the UN Human Rights Council in 2011. UN Human Rights Council (2011), [Report of the Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children](#), Joy Ngozi Ezeilo, 13 April 2011, A/HRC/17/35.
- 141 Equality Now, [‘Listen to survivors – don’t jeopardize efforts to prevent sex trafficking’](#), 21 September 2013.
- 142 See the definition of THB as defined in the [UN General Assembly Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children](#), Supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, 15 November 2000, Article 3(a).
- 143 *Ibid.*, see the definition of trafficking of children in Article 3(c).
- 144 See the definition of transnational referral mechanism as defined in ICMPD (2010), [Guidelines for the Development of a Transnational Referral Mechanism for Trafficked Persons in Europe](#).
- 145 See UN Women (n.d.), [Gender Equality Glossary](#).

# **ANNEX I**

## **Survey of Non-Governmental Frontline Service Providers Summary Report**

# METHODOLOGY

The study is based on a convenience sample of respondents working in the sphere of combating trafficking in human beings (N=385) including representatives of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) (management and support staff), international organizations and OSCE field operations. Participants of this study were reached through ODIHR's and UN Women's databases and networks, as well as through distribution on social media platforms. The respondents, who were directly contacted by ODIHR and UN Women staff, ICAT and other interagency mechanisms, such as the UN Global Protection Cluster Anti-Trafficking Task team, as well as the members of the research group, disseminated the survey within their professional networks. The data was collected from 27 April to 18 of May 2020. Information on the background and objectives of the survey were sent to all relevant respondents and distributed on social media platforms, with a link to the online survey platform on which the data was collected. The link transferred respondents to the website, where information regarding the survey organizers, the purpose of the study, and the possibility to give or withhold consent to participate was provided. Participants were able to select among 18 languages to read and respond to the survey (including Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, English, French, Hindi, Italian, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Vietnamese and Yoruba).

Limitations of the research include underrepresentation of different groups of respondents: most of the survey participants are working in NGOs, while others involved in identification and providing assistance to victims of trafficking in human beings are underrepresented. The survey was specifically targeted at NGOs and representatives of intergovernmental organizations (IGOs) as respondents. Stakeholders from governmental organizations were not recruited for participation in this survey, as this survey was specifically aimed at respondents from NGOs. Other limitations relate to the format of the

survey, which is formulated with mostly close-ended questions. This could lead to a lack of interpretation of respondents' opinions and experience or to misinterpretation of some answers. However, this limitation is partly mitigated by including several open-ended questions and a field to add further information in the closed questions.

## A. SAMPLE

The majority of respondents who took part in the survey are representatives of NGOs (N=315, 81.8 per cent), while representatives of other organizations including religious and voluntary organizations constitute 10.4 per cent (N=40), and intergovernmental organizations – 7.8 per cent (N=30).

In total, respondents from 102 countries from Africa (N=50, 13.0 per cent), the Americas (N=73, 19.0 per cent), Asia (N=100, 26.0 per cent) Europe (N=159, 41.3 per cent), and Oceania (N=3, 0.7 per cent) participated in the research. After the official data collection period, 15 more stakeholders completed the survey. In total, respondents from 103 countries participated in the research, from which responses from 102 countries were analyzed in total.<sup>1</sup> The majority of respondents who participated in the survey after the official data-collection period were women (N=8), one person preferred not to identify his/her gender. Respondents from the United States represent the biggest subgroup among countries (N=26, 6.8 per cent). All other countries were represented by 1 to 17 respondents. More than half of all respondents (N=207, 53.8 per cent) were from OSCE countries.

---

1 The additional responses represented countries already included in the survey report analysis, with the exception of the Republic of Niger. The other responses were provided after the closing of the survey and could not be included in the analysis.

## REGIONS (UN CLASSIFICATION)

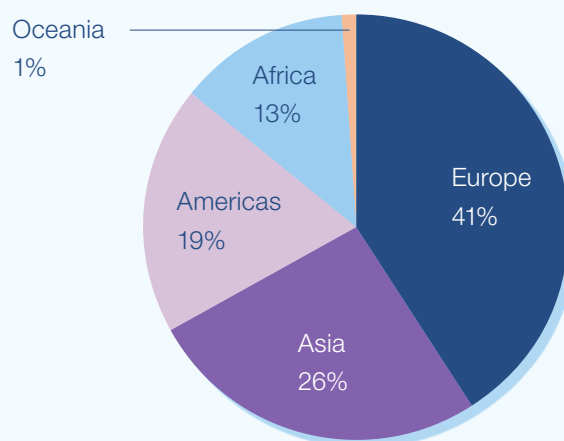


Figure 1. Regions represented by the respondents

The participants in the survey represent different age groups, the largest percentage of which were between 35 and 50 years old (N=178, 46.2 per cent). Respondents were predominantly female (N=290, 75.3 per cent). In the sub-sample for OSCE countries, this disproportion is more significant (N=181, 87.4 percent) in comparison with other countries (N=109, 61.2 per cent).<sup>2</sup>

Most respondents have been working on anti-trafficking issues for more than 10 years (N=170, 44.2 per cent), 21 per cent have six to ten years' experience, 28.8 per cent have one to five years and only 6 per cent had less than a year experience combating trafficking in human beings. When asked about the areas in which their organizations work to combat trafficking in human beings a majority of respondents reported awareness raising and prevention (N=331, 86.0 per cent). Other areas include direct service provision with shelter accommodation (N=163, 42.3 per cent), without shelter accommodation (N=195, 50.6 per cent), outreach to at risk groups, including victims of trafficking (N=249, 64.7 per cent), lobbying and/or advocacy (N=247, 64.2 per cent), and research (N=192, 49.9 per cent). The multiple-selection option was available for this question so that the participants could report all the areas of their work.

There are significant differences when comparing OSCE participating States with the other countries: a lower percentage of respondents from OSCE countries are working on outreach (59.4 per cent while in non-OSCE

countries 70.8 per cent), research (40.6 per cent in OSCE countries compared to 60.7 per cent in other countries), lobbying and advocacy (58.9 per cent in OSCE countries compared to 70.2 per cent in other countries).

In the previous 2019 OSCE survey "OSCE National Referral Mechanism Update Survey", which serves as the baseline for this COVID-19 related survey, 440 NGO respondents from 56 countries participated. The baseline survey and this COVID-related survey, upon which this report is based, follow the same methodology. The number of countries represented was almost half of this survey as only residents of OSCE participating States were recruited for participation. The largest groups of respondents were from the United States and United Kingdom. All age groups were represented as survey participants, respondents belonging to the age group from 35 to 50 also predominated. As in this study, the majority of respondents were women (81.0 per cent) and representatives of NGOs were again the largest subset (46.1 per cent), but by less than the current survey. Overall, in the previous survey 201 respondents working in NGOs participated while in the current one 315 represented NGOs. In the previous survey, other respondents not represented in the current survey took part, such as specialists from government institutions, including prosecutors, judiciary, border security, as well as health practitioners, legal practitioners and social service providers (non-NGO). Due to the time-sensitive nature of the current survey, only NGO stakeholders were targeted.

<sup>2</sup> Responses of stakeholders from OSCE member states were analyzed and presented only in those cases where p-value is lower than 0,05.

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

## A. NRMS OR EQUIVALENT SYSTEMS

Respondents assessed the functional capability of the National Referral Mechanisms (NRM) in their countries during the COVID-19 pandemic. Only 14 per cent of respondents assessed the NRM or its equivalent systems as fully operational (N=54), while in some countries the NRM is not operational at all due to measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic (N=26, 6.8 per cent). Almost half of survey participants stated that the NRM or its equivalent systems are partly operational due to national measures implemented related to the COVID-19 pandemic (N=190, 49.4 per cent). Countries represented by 13.0 per cent of respondents do not have a NRM or its equivalent systems. Respondents from OSCE participating States reported having a fully operational NRM more frequently – 16.9 per cent (N=35), while only 10.7 per cent (N=19) were reported fully operational in other countries. NRMs were assessed as not operational by 4.3 per cent (N=9) of respondents, while for non-OSCE countries this number is 9.6 per cent (N=17).

In more than 80 per cent of the countries represented by the survey respondents, basic services remained available to both victims and survivors of trafficking. These are medical, psychological, social and legal services, as well as shelter accommodation. Other services are not widely available, including return to the country of origin (N=249, 68.2 per cent), family reunification (N=228, 63.0 per cent), reflection and recovery period (N=210, 59.0 per cent), witness protection (N=202, 57.5 per cent), regularization of migration status (N=203, 57.3 per cent), financial assistance (N=203, 55.6 per cent) and compensation (N=126, 36.2 per cent). Additional services such as substance dependency treatment (N=162, 46.4 per cent) and long-term accommodation (N=144, 41.5 per cent) was noted as available by less than half of respondents. Services related to reintegration – assistance with employment was reported to be available by (N=213, 59.0 per cent) of respondents and professional education or skill training by (N=225, 63.2 per cent) of respondents.

Overall, respondents working in OSCE countries reported higher accessibility to services for victims of trafficking (VoTs) in their countries compared with other countries.

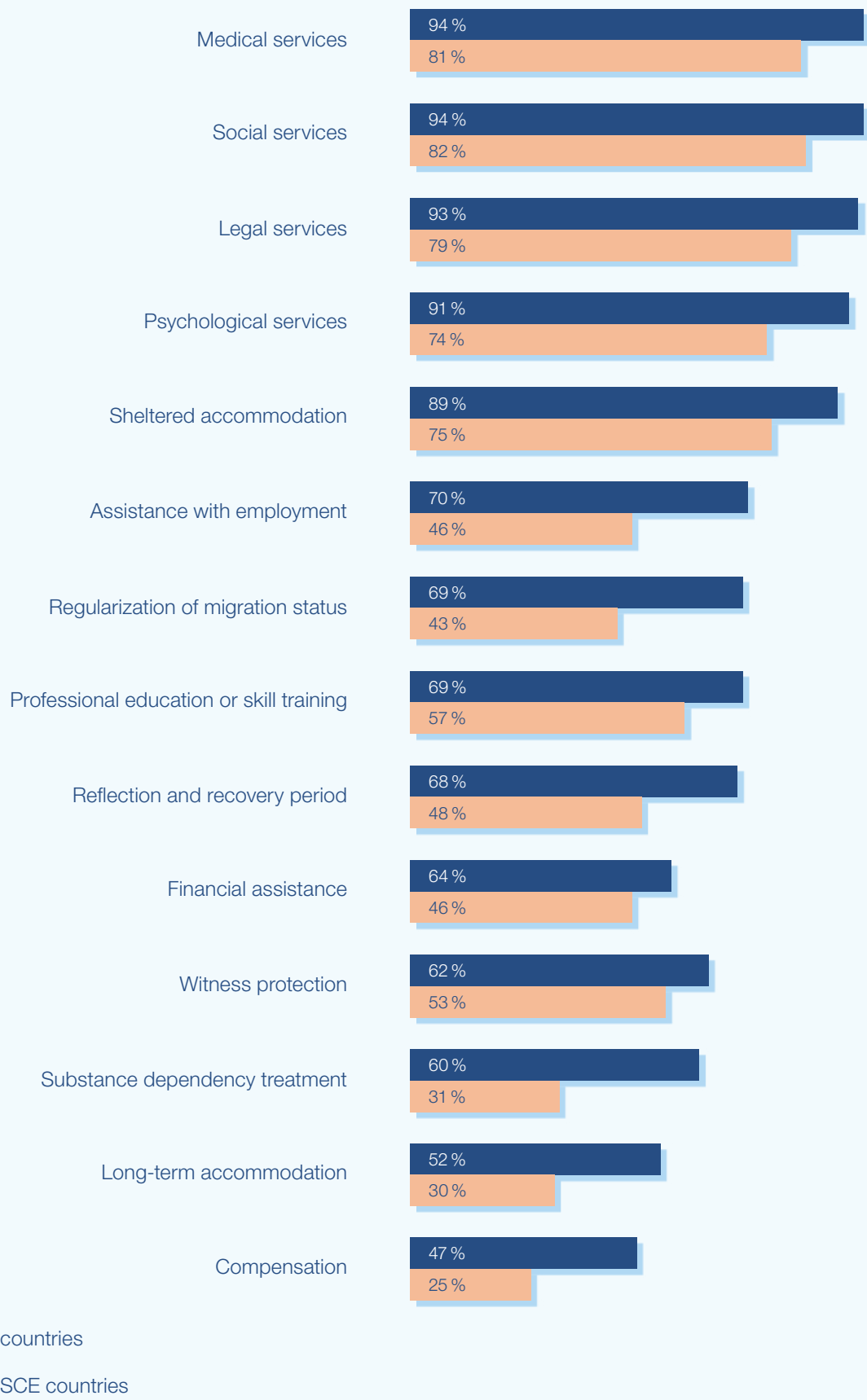


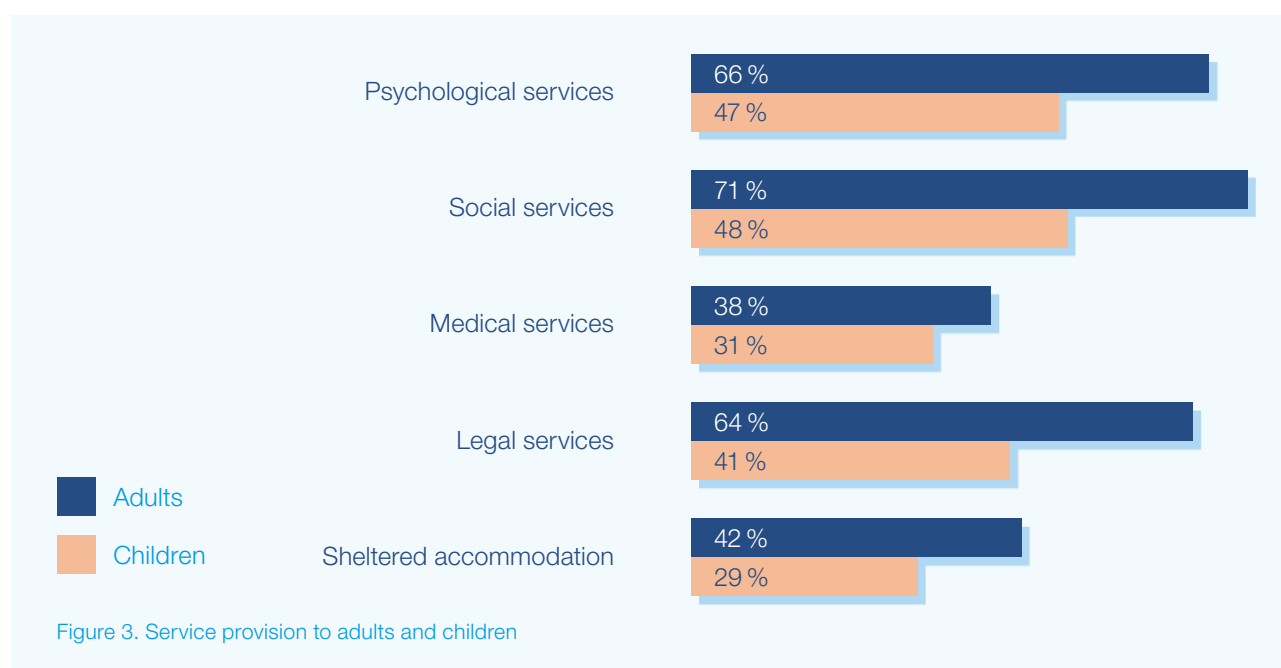
Figure 2. Services available to victims and survivors of trafficking: OSCE countries and non OSCE countries

## B. TARGET GROUPS AND TYPES OF SERVICES

The frontline respondents who took part in the survey were asked to select the target groups they work with. Respondents working with survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation predominated (N=313, 81.3 per cent). More than 50 per cent of respondents work with survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation (N=232, 60.3 per cent) and child survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation (N=225, 58.4 per cent). Overall, about 30 per cent of the respondents work with other target groups: survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of criminal activities, forced begging, forced marriage, child survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation.

The victims of domestic violence as an at-risk group vulnerable to trafficking in human beings are targeted for assistance by 53.5 per cent (N=206) of respondents. Other at-risk groups targeted by anti-trafficking organizations presented by respondents included children of migrants, unaccompanied children, street children, homeless people, people with alcohol or substance dependencies, people in the sex industry, regular labour migrants, internally displaced people, asylum seekers, refugees and irregular migrants.

The respondents participating in the survey reported that they offer a wide range of services to their beneficiaries. The majority of the respondents provide psychological (N=252, 65.5 per cent) and social services to adults (N=275, 71.4 per cent). More respondents reported providing services to adult beneficiaries compared to children (Figure 3).



Other services provided to beneficiaries (both adults and children) include: substance dependency treatment, regularization of migration status, financial assistance, education or skill training, return to the country of origin, family reunification, and witness protection. Fewer than 20 per cent of respondents reported provision of legal guardians to children (N=74, 19.2 per cent).

Respondents reported having additional difficulties in accessing services and procedures for their beneficiaries due to measures implemented related to the

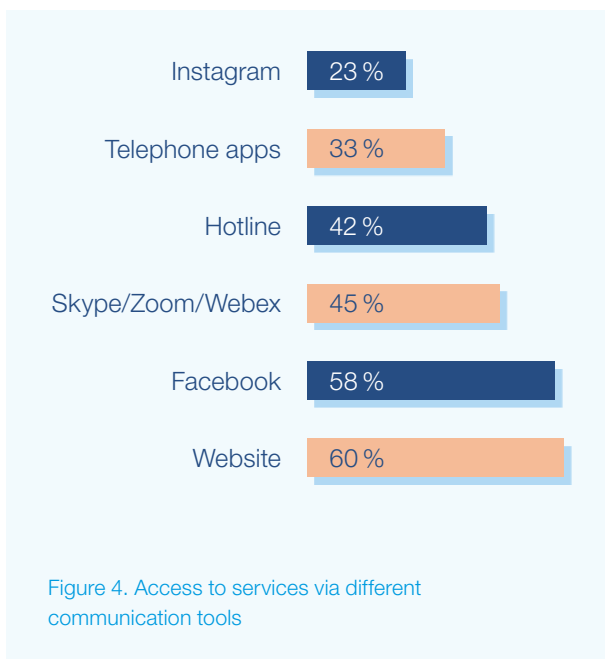
COVID-19 pandemic. The biggest number of survey participants, more than 40 per cent, reported difficulties in accessing statutory identification procedures (N=167, 43.4 per cent), sheltered accommodation (N=170, 44.2 per cent), and social services (N=169, 43.9 per cent). However, other difficulties in addition to those mentioned above, were identified, namely difficulties in accessing referrals to NRMs or equivalent systems, regularization of migration status and non-sheltered accommodation, as well as psychological, medical, interpretation and legal services.



Respondents from OSCE participating States more frequently reported having difficulties in accessing sheltered accommodation for their beneficiaries. Respondents from outside the region more frequently reported barriers in accessing medical, psychological, legal and social services. One possible explanation could be the overall higher level of operationality of NRMs or their equivalent systems in the OSCE region.

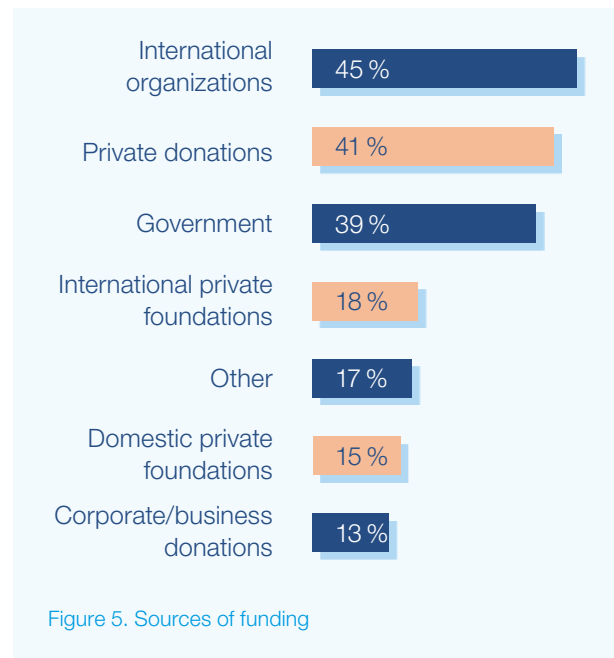
In nearly half of the organizations represented by respondents, staff currently work remotely and support is provided online or by telephone (N=170, 44.2 per cent). Another significant portion of staff of the respondent organizations work on a rotational basis in the office/shelter (N=109, 28.3 per cent), while some staff in organizations continue to work in the office or shelter (N=37, 9.6 per cent), and in a few organizations staff do not work at all (N=3, 0.8 per cent).

Accessing services of the respondent anti-trafficking organizations is mostly available via telephone (N=343, 89.1 per cent) and email (N=291, 75.6 per cent). Far fewer organizations are accessible via online services or a hotline. A larger proportion of respondents in the OSCE reported accessibility of their organization for (potential) beneficiaries via their website, Facebook page, Skype/Zoom/WebEx, hotline, telephone apps and Instagram. Despite the wider use of online services reported by the respondents from OSCE states, these services are insufficiently used in all countries by



organizations combating trafficking in human beings. Telephone is the most prevalent means of accessing assistance from an organization (NGO or IGO), despite a number of limitations, especially in the situation of lockdown and isolation, where a victim may not be able to access a phone or call for assistance.

Regarding the main sources of funding of organizations represented by survey respondents, the main sources are international organizations (N=172, 44.7 per cent), private donations (N=159, 41.3 per cent), and government (N=146, 37.9 per cent). Other sources of funding include domestic private foundations, international private foundations, corporate/business donations and were reported by less than 20 per cent of respondents.



A majority of respondents (N=298, 77.4 per cent) stated that their organizations currently require additional funding to address needs resulting from COVID-19 pandemic and an overwhelming majority of respondents reported the need for additional funding in the next 12 months to address long-term consequences (N=333, 86.5 per cent) resulting from COVID-19 pandemic. According to the respondents, if organizations do not receive the required funding in 2020-2021, only about a quarter of them will remain fully operational (N=91, 23.6 per cent), more than half will remain partly operational (N=205, 53.2 per cent) and 3.6 per cent will close (N=14). Some respondents found it difficult to answer this question.

**DOES YOUR ORGANIZATION CURRENTLY REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO ADDRESS NEEDS RESULTING FROM COVID-19 PANDEMIC**

- Yes
- No

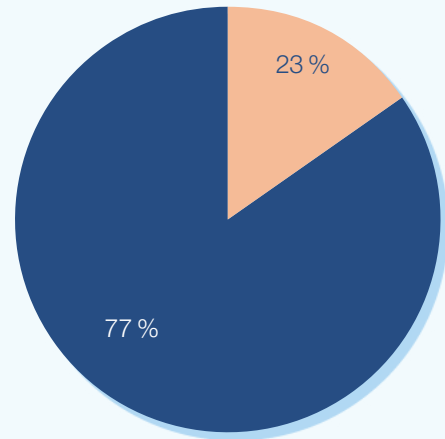


Figure 6. Additional funding needed for NGOs to address needs resulting from COVID-19 pandemic: currently

**WILL YOUR ORGANIZATION REQUIRE ADDITIONAL FUNDING TO ADDRESS NEEDS RESULTING FROM COVID 19 PANDEMIC IN THE NEXT 12 MONTHS**

- Yes
- No

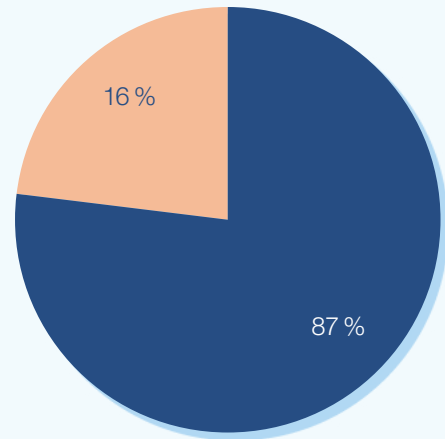


Figure 7. Additional funding needed for NGOs to address needs resulting from COVID-19 pandemic: in the next 12 months

**IF YOUR ORGANIZATION DOES NOT RECEIVE THE REQUIRED FUNDING IN 2020-2021**

- It will remain partially operational
- It will remain fully operational
- I don't know
- It will close

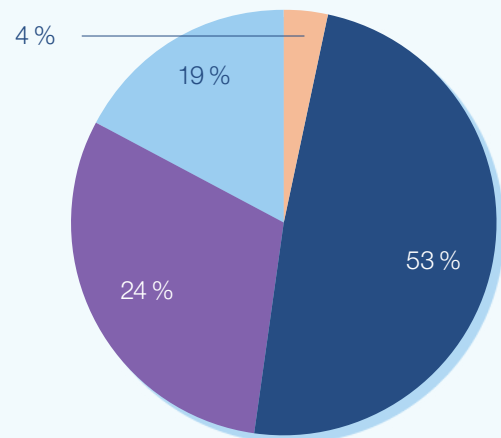


Figure 8. Proposed scenario for the functioning of the organization<sup>3</sup>

3 As the majority of respondents were NGOs, Figure 8 represents the impact specifically on them.

In comparison to other countries, a smaller proportion of respondents from OSCE countries reported a current and future need for additional funding. However, these numbers are still significant globally and could result in a loss of a large number of anti-trafficking NGOs, experienced staff and the long-term ability to ensure effective functioning of NRMs and equivalent systems.

## 1. CHANGES IN DYNAMICS OF TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS DUE TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC: TRENDS AND AT-RISK GROUPS

Respondents were asked about trends in trafficking in human beings that they are seeing or have received reports of during the COVID-19 pandemic. The respondents suggested two main tendencies: increase of online recruitment by human traffickers (N=206, 65.4 per cent), as well as trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation online, including through webcam or online pornography (N=217, 69.6 per cent). In addition, a majority of respondents reported an increase in other forms of trafficking, excluding trafficking for the purpose of adoption. However, a majority of participants believe that some types of trafficking in human beings is decreasing or the dynamics have not changed. For example, 32.5 per cent (N=100) of respondents responded that trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in physical locations has not changed, while 24.4 per cent (N=75) responded that it has decreased. In addition, 28.3 per cent (N=85) responded that there is no change in trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation, while 14.7 per cent (N=44) responded that it has decreased.

When comparing geographically the responses related to changes in the dynamics of different forms of trafficking, several significant differences were identified. In the following section only statistically significant differences between regions are presented. The UN classification of countries was used. The comparative analysis included Asia, America, Africa, Europe, and Oceania. Each region was compared with all the other regions. Answers “not applicable” were not taken into account.

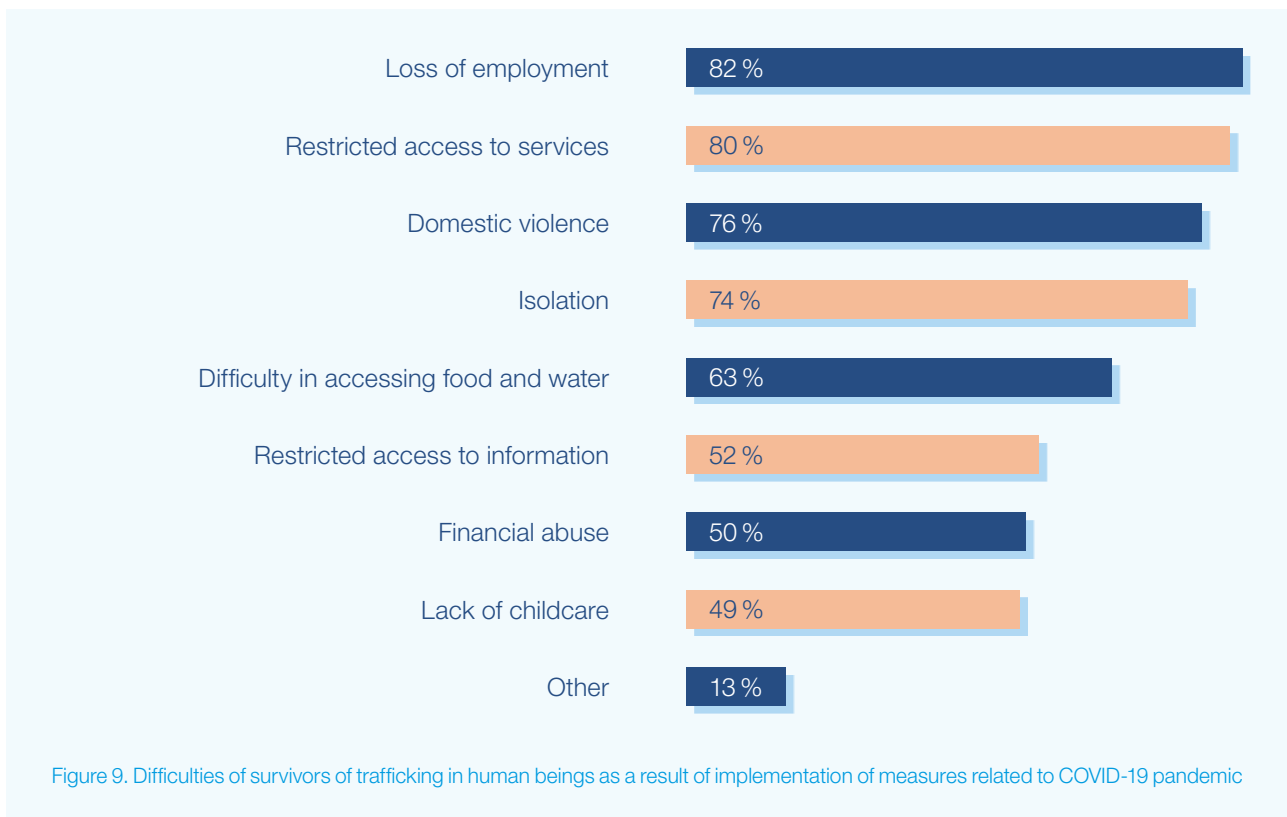
Respondents from Europe<sup>4</sup>, in comparison to other regions, more frequently suggested a decrease in trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in physical locations (35.1 per cent) compared to other regions where this indicator was 24.9 per cent. In addition, a higher proportion of European respondents suggested no change in this form of trafficking (41.5 per cent compared to 36.1 per cent in all other regions) and fewer saw an increase (23.4 per cent in Europe, 39.1 per cent all other regions). Trafficking for the purpose of begging had a similar distribution of responses, 33.8 per cent of Europeans saw a decrease and 45.6 per cent no change, while for other regions it was 23.7 per cent and 32.2 per cent respectively. A larger proportion of respondents from all other regions have reported that an increase in trafficking for the purpose of forced begging is likely (44.1 per cent) in comparison to their counterparts in Europe (20.6 per cent).

Respondents from Europe less frequently suggested an increase in trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage (13.8 per cent, 36.0 per cent in other regions). Nearly 70 per cent of respondents from Europe suggested that they expect no change in this form of trafficking in human beings compared to 46.4 per cent of respondents from all other regions. A smaller proportion of respondents from Asia suggested that they expect some change in the dynamics of trafficking for the purpose of adoption – 43.2 per cent in comparison to 64.6 per cent of respondents from all other regions, who expect no change. In addition, a decrease in trafficking for the purpose of adoption was suggested by 31.8 per cent respondents from Asia in comparison to 22.0 per cent of respondents in all other regions. An increase was suggested by 25.0 per cent of Asian respondents in comparison to 13.1 per cent of respondents in all other regions.

More than 60 per cent of respondents considered men more vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation (N=176, 60.3 per cent), while both men 43.3 per cent (N=109) and boys 42.1 per cent (N=106) could be more vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of criminal activities. In addition, increased vulnerability of girls during the COVID-19 pandemic was reported for trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage (N=208, 77.6

---

4 There are 44 countries in Europe today, according to the United Nations.



per cent), while boys were reported to be more vulnerable to recruitment and exploitation in trafficking for the purpose of begging (N=124, 51.0 per cent). The same groups will be more vulnerable in the post-COVID-19 pandemic period, according to survey respondents.

There are several groups that have been identified as more vulnerable for recruitment and exploitation by traffickers during the COVID-19 pandemic. A majority of respondents considered women to be more vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in physical locations (N=200, 61.9 per cent), while girls are likely to become more vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation online (webcam, pornography, etc.) (N=112, 34.7 per cent). This finding may be explained by the fact that children and youth are the most active Internet users compared to other age groups.<sup>5</sup>

Respondents were asked to select the difficulties survivors of trafficking in human beings are facing as a result of implementation of measures related to the COVID-19

pandemic, based on reports of their organizations. The top four issues reported by the respondents were loss of employment (N=316, 82.1 per cent), restricted access to services (N=307, 79.7 per cent), domestic violence (N=293, 76.1 per cent), and isolation (N=285, 74 per cent). Overall, other difficulties included difficulty in accessing food and water, financial abuse,<sup>6</sup> lack of childcare, restricted access to information, and difficulty in accessing NRMs or equivalent systems.

Regarding additional difficulties experienced by victims of trafficking as a result of implementation of measures related to COVID-19 pandemic, most of the respondents reported engagement in riskier behaviour by VoTs to continue earning money for the trafficker (N=261, 67.8 per cent), increasing debt (N=258, 67.0 per cent), and difficulty in accessing medical services (N=243, 63.1 per cent). Other difficulties mentioned by the respondents include difficulty in accessing food and water, in accessing an NRM or equivalent systems, sheltered accommodation, NGOs and/or hotlines.

5 See, UNICEF report “Children in a digital world”.

6 Financial abuse is a form of abuse when one intimate partner has control over the other partner’s access to economic resources, which diminishes the victim’s capacity to support themselves and forces them to depend on the perpetrator financially.

## 2. IMPACT OF COVID-19 ON SERVICES

Based on the survey, the COVID-19 pandemic has had a different impact on the number of identified VoTs depending on the operability of the NRM or its equivalent system. In countries where there is no NRM, equivalent system or the NRM is not operational, more respondents reported an increase in the number of identified cases during COVID-19 compared to countries where it is fully or partly operational. One possible explanation is the absence of established systems to prevent vulnerability to

trafficking of at-risk groups and re-trafficking of survivors of trafficking, which may have increased the number of VoTs due to the national measures related to COVID-19 and the financial downturn. In any case, in countries where the NRM or its equivalent system is fully operational, more respondents reported that there has been no significant change in the number of identified VoTs (N=18, 33.3 per cent). This is the result of well-established interagency co-operation between government and civil society and proper functioning of identification processes, rehabilitation and reintegration of VoTs, as well as prevention efforts.

**REPORTED NUMBER OF IDENTIFIED VOTs DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC HAS**

	Not operational/ no NRM		Partially operational		Fully operational	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Decreased	12	15.8	52	27.4	15	27.8
No change	17	22.4	37	19.5	18	33.3
Increased	25	32.9	38	20.0	7	13.0
Unknown	22	28.9	63	33.2	14	25.9
Total	76	100.0	190	100.0	54	100.0

Table 1. Operation of NRMs and number of identified VoTs

Most respondents reported that more time is needed to complete statutory procedures for identification of VoTs (N=162, 42.1 per cent) and that beneficiaries are experiencing changes in procedure, delays or postponements in their administrative, criminal or civil cases (N=221, 57.4 per cent) due to the implementation of measures related to COVID-19 pandemic. In addition, more than half of the respondents reported an increase in the number of requests for service/assistance to their organizations after the implementation of protective measures related to COVID-19 pandemic by national governments (N=202, 52.5 per cent). Overall, the survey demonstrated that compared to the situation before the COVID-19 pandemic, based on the evaluation of the respondent organizations, their beneficiaries have found it more difficult to access a wide range of support and services. Figure 10 summarizes the number and percentage of

respondents who indicated that access to services and the satisfaction of basic needs had become significantly more difficult or somewhat more difficult. Figure 11 presents distribution of responses regarding changes in accessibility of support and services for both victims and survivors of trafficking.

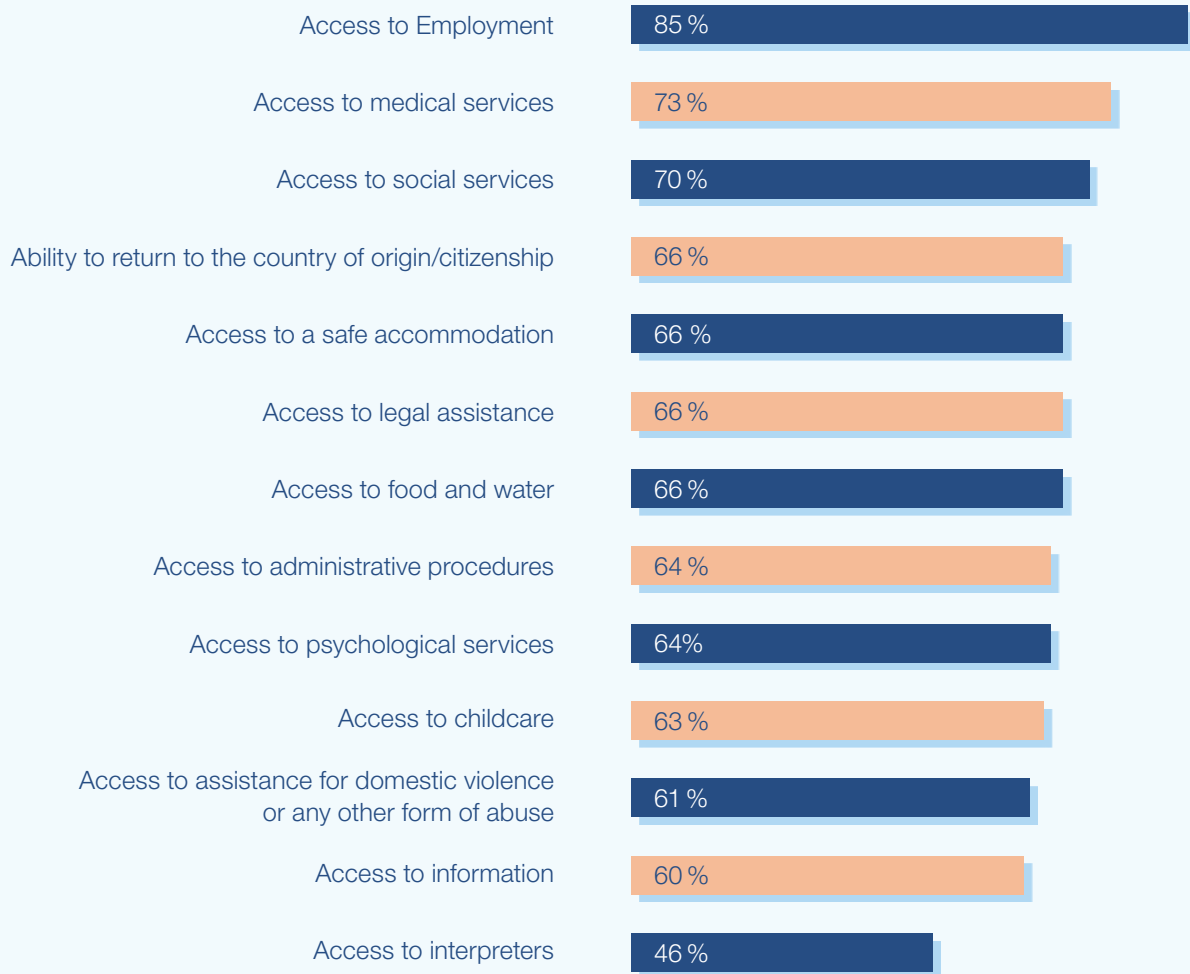
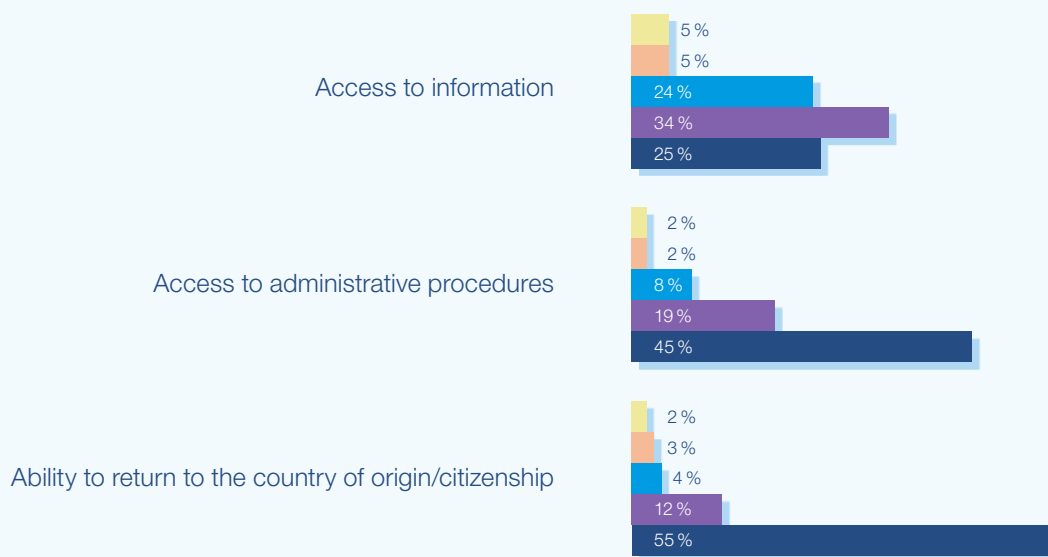
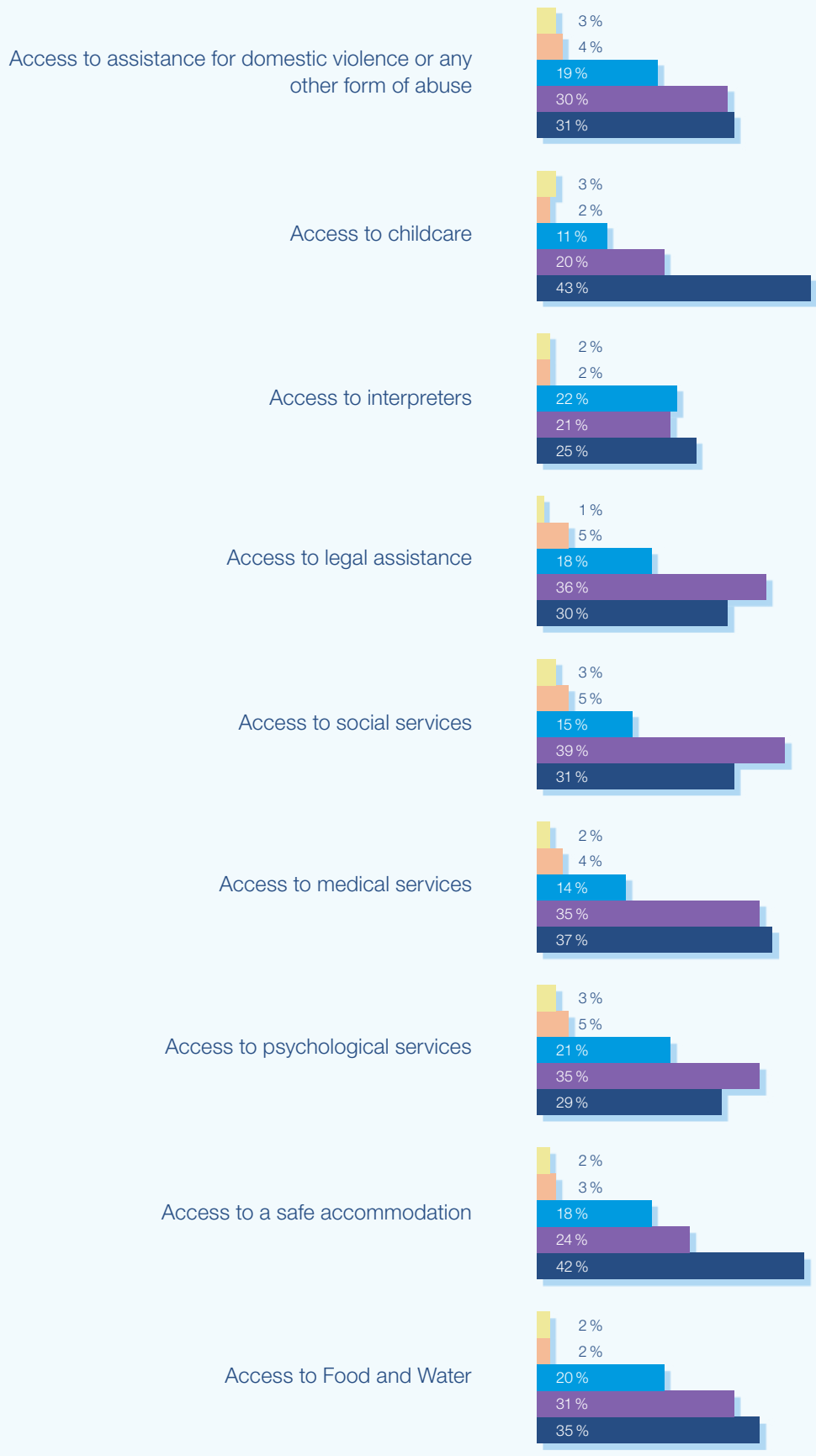


Figure 10. Decreased access to services and opportunities for the beneficiaries





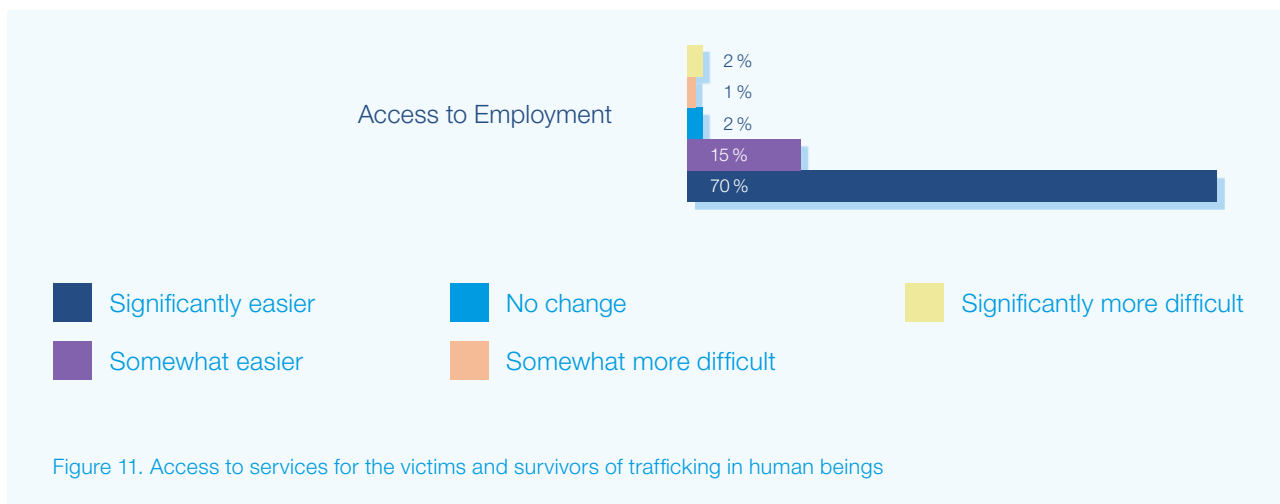


Figure 11. Access to services for the victims and survivors of trafficking in human beings

The majority of respondents reported the emergence of new beneficiary needs as a result of the implementation of measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic (N=269, 69.9 per cent).

The respondents evaluated the availability of personal protective equipment (PPE) for their beneficiaries, such as masks, gloves, sanitizers and soap as much lower than to staff of organizations, only 17.9 per cent (N=69) reported full availability of PPE to all the beneficiaries. Almost half of respondents (N=185, 48.0 per cent) stated that PPE is mostly or somewhat available and 34.0 per cent (N=131) reported access to PPE as “mostly unavailable” or “not available”.

Only 40.5 per cent of the respondents reported PPE to be fully available to all staff of their organization (N=156) and almost one quarter of the research sample stated that it is mostly available to majority of staff (N=94, 24.4 per cent).

### 3. CHILDREN AT RISK OF TRAFFICKING

In the research sample 61.8 per cent (N=238) of respondents’ organizations provide assistance to child VoTs. Respondents working in these organizations reported the services available to children in their countries: more than 90 per cent of respondents noted provision of medical, psychological, and social services, and more than 80 per cent have shelter accommodation and legal services, education or skill training. Other services available to children in some countries include substance dependency treatment, reflection and recovery period, regularization of migration status including, asylum application, temporary and permanent residence

permits, financial assistance, compensation, provision of legal guardians, return to the country of origin, family reunification, and witness protection.

However, proper functioning of the national child protection systems was affected by measures implemented related to the COVID-19 pandemic: 56.3 per cent (N=134) of respondents evaluated their systems as partially operational due to measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic and 9.2 per cent (N=22) stated that child protection systems are not operational at all. Only 19.3 per cent (N=46) evaluated national child protection system as fully operational. In addition, 26.5 per cent (N=63) of respondents reported that their child beneficiaries experienced changes in procedures, delays or postponements in the appointment of legal guardians due to the implementation of measures related to COVID-19 pandemic.

In assessing the potential vulnerability of different categories of children to trafficking post COVID-19 pandemic, most respondents suggested an increased vulnerability of all categories of children who are considered at higher risk for recruitment and exploitation in trafficking in human beings. The majority of respondents (more than 60 per cent) see increasing vulnerability of children of parents with alcohol or substance dependency, street children, child victims of abuse, children of migrants, stateless children/internally displaced/undocumented children, and unaccompanied children. The following groups of children have been identified by respondents as particularly vulnerable: children victims of abuse (N=186, 81.2 per cent), street children (N=166, 73.8 per cent) and unaccompanied children (N=159, 71.0 per cent).



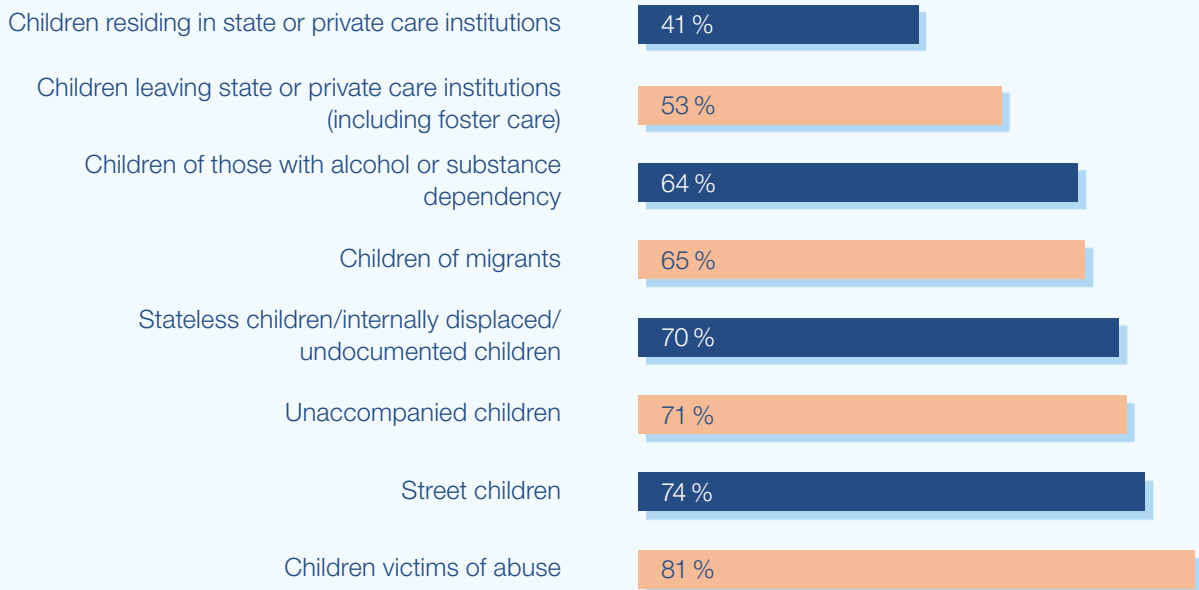


Figure 12. Increasing vulnerability of different categories of children

#### 4. SHELTERS

Overall, 40.0 per cent (N=154) of respondents who participated in the survey provide shelter accommodation for survivors and VoTs. One third of the respondents reported an increasing number of requests for sheltered accommodation to their organizations during implementation of measures related to COVID-19 pandemic (N=52, 33.8 per cent), while 37.0 per cent (N=57) stated that the number of requests did not change. Another

17.5 per cent (N=27) reported a decreased number of requests, and 11.7 per cent (N=18) chose the option “I don’t know” to this question.

Most of the organizations represented by respondents have sufficient spaces in shelters. More than a quarter of respondents reported that despite having sufficient spaces in the shelter accommodation, they cannot accept new beneficiaries due to changes in the intake procedures due to COVID-19 (N=39, 25.3 per cent).

#### DURING IMPLEMENTATION OF MEASURES RELATED TO COVID-19 PANDEMIC, THE SHELTERED ACCOMMODATION HAS:

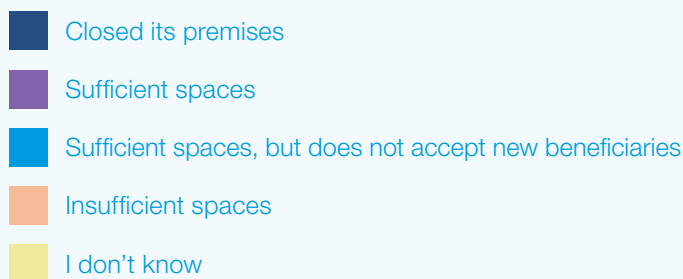


Figure 13. Accessibility of sheltered accommodation

## C. INTERAGENCY CO-ORDINATION AND CO-OPERATION THROUGH THE PANDEMIC

There is almost an equal distribution of responses indicating difficulties or lack of co-ordination and co-operation with government agencies due to the implementation of national measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic: 50.1 per cent (N=193) reported having difficulties. The respondents mentioned several types of difficulties:

### 1. DECREASED ACCESSIBILITY OF GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS AND AVAILABILITY OF HUMAN RESOURCES

This problem was most frequently mentioned by the respondents to the survey. Most government staff is working remotely due to measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, respondents face difficulties in reaching government institutions, including social service providers, law enforcement agencies, child protection services and services for migrants. In addition, the number of services provided to beneficiaries is limited as these organizations are not able to accept new clients/beneficiaries. The services are limited to both new and current beneficiaries due to the remote work conditions of staff of government institutions. The survey demonstrates a possible underutilization of online services by governmental institutions for communication with both NGOs and clients/beneficiaries during the implementation of national measures related to COVID-19.

*“Government agencies are not fully operational or work only partially.”* Ukraine

*“Government authorities are working in shifts hence less man power on the call.”* Central African Republic

*“There are no difficulties in co-operation with government agencies, except for the limitations of the number of personnel who are also in compulsory social isolation.”* Peru

However, some respondents reported availability of law enforcement agencies and their readiness for co-operation on cases of trafficking in human beings.

*“The Royal Government of Cambodia, through the National Committee to counter trafficking in persons, provides very warm and good co-operation.”* Cambodia

Several respondents reported that government institutions do not respond the requests from NGOs and other organizations, do not pass the information regarding cases to NGOs and do not refer victims to NGOs. Sometimes it may lead to the situation when cases of trafficking in human beings are not being investigated and reflected in official statistics. Some respondents described a lack of meetings with government institutions working on combating trafficking in human beings both online and offline, resulting in a “co-ordination gap”.

*“There are difficulties in making contacts with law enforcement officials to identify and provide assistance to VoTs - that is, we do not receive any information about people who need our help. We do not receive feedback in the case of our requests for criminal cases that may be related to human trafficking. State institutions and organizations will not redirect victims to us.”* Belarus

One respondent attributed inadequate co-ordination to the lack of government strategy. However, in some cases, it may be the result of inadequate information technology equipment of government staff. Despite having an NRM or equivalent system, the problems with co-ordination may occur at the grassroots level and relate to insufficient availability of resources for communication (e.g., laptops, smartphones, applications).

*“Most government officials do not have the Zoom application... Most of them, especially those working at local government level, do not have laptops or smart phones that would enable them to connect with us at central government level. There is a co-ordination mechanism for COVID-19 response at national level but not at local government level.”* Malawi

*“Government employees are working from home and not always easily available. Online meetings cannot be arranged due to lack of technical capacities of government staff. Contact via telephone is also limited.”* Austria

Some respondents reported that interagency meetings were postponed without the option to move them online as an alternative. This led to the suspension of the proper functions of the NRMs and equivalent systems and left VoTs in situations where they were not able to receive the necessary protection and assistance.

*“Operations team meetings are the only way the NRM works - in terms of exchanging information on what is happening with victim identification and protection. This is now disabled and no other communication options are used. Social services work slowly, as do the courts.”* Croatia

## **2. SLOWED IDENTIFICATION PROCESSES AND PROVISION OF ASSISTANCE TO VOTs AND AT-RISK GROUPS**

This was mentioned in regard to governmental institutions providing social services, courts and other organizations dealing with VoTs and at-risk groups.

*“An all-stakeholder meeting scheduled for April was postponed, without the option of an online alternative. This has postponed plans to progress on identification procedures.”* Ireland

*“Access to government agencies is limited, which slows down paperwork processes.”* Vietnam

*“Across all sectors remote working and fewer staff has resulted in delays in accessing medium and longer term mainstream supports.”* Great Britain

In addition, the operational procedures in the sphere of support and protection of VoTs have been impacted.

*“The pandemic has meant that a lot of core government work (to progress positive initiatives to strengthen support and protection for victims of human trafficking) has been put on hold.”* Australia

*“The lockdown has slowed down activities.”* Nigeria

As a result, there are delays in response to problems of beneficiaries. In some cases, VoTs are not able to receive assistance in emergencies.

*“A number of referrals, requests for information, have not been addressed as quickly as our beneficiaries need.”* Philippines

*“The staff are not all at work and skeleton staff are not able to help in emergencies.”* South Africa

This results in a slowdown or suspension of administrative procedures, in particular those related to temporary residence permits, impacting the regularization of migration status of VoTs in the country of destination. As staff members of government institutions who are part of the NRMs are working remotely, fewer specialists are available and insufficient technical resources contribute to a slowed down system. This also results in postponement, delays or adoption of alternate procedures in criminal cases. The disruption of administrative and criminal proceedings, in combination with decreased accessibility of services, negatively impacts the functioning of anti-trafficking systems by escalating the risk that VoTs and survivors may be re-trafficked.

## **3. DEPRIORITIZING COMBATting TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS DUE TO THE INCREASED GOVERNMENT WORKLOAD DURING THE PANDEMIC**

This relates to national anti-trafficking frameworks, such as NRMs or equivalent systems, including identification, rehabilitation, investigation of trafficking cases, as well as administrative, civil and criminal proceedings. The limited provision of government resources to combat trafficking in human beings in some countries has been further exacerbated by COVID-19.

*“Police is much less available to assist our labour inspectors in their visits to risky sectors. Police have other tasks due to the COVID-19 measures, accompanying labour inspectors on visits is not a priority at all.”* Belgium

## **4. SUSPENSION OR POSTPONEMENT OF EDUCATION AND AWARENESS-RAISING ACTIVITIES**

Additionally, difficulties in contacting and meeting with government institutions due to national lockdown measures related to COVID-19 has led to postponement or suspension of training and educational activities organized by NGOs on behalf of government institutions.

*“Training of government agencies is pretty much shut down.”* United States

*“Our organization is working with the federal, provincial and local government for implementing different training, parliamentarians’ initiatives and conferences on*

countering human trafficking and development of policies and programs, allocation of budget to implement or address TIP effectively. However, COVID 19 pandemic has halted all activities, it has been difficult to track each and every municipality, since they are busy addressing the COVID-19 issues arising in their locality.” Nepal

#### **5. SUSPENSION OR POSTPONEMENT OF PREVENTION ACTIVITIES LEADING TO HEIGHTENED EXPOSURE OF VOTs, SURVIVORS AND AT-RISK GROUPS TO ADDITIONAL FORMS OF EXPLOITATION AND VIOLENCE**

COVID-19 related national lockdown measures have resulted in the inability of NGOs to provide assistance to at-risk groups through outreach and fieldwork. As a result of this and the COVID-19 related national lockdown measures, VoTs have become isolated with their abusers and have been reported to experience other forms of exploitation and violence. NGOs survey respondents also reported a rise in domestic violence and other forms of exploitation and violence towards women, girl and boy survivors of trafficking in their households, as the lockdown measures made them more vulnerable. With decrease in or stoppage of monitoring activities by NGOs, there is an increase in vulnerability of at-risk populations, especially children, both in families and childcare institutions. Many preventive activities were suspended or postponed. In addition, some respondents mentioned difficulties in co-ordination with communities and local leaders.

*“The identification of children has been halted, as NGO are restricted to visit all the hot spots and at risks areas. Social welfare officers are too worried to give permission for our staff to conduct house visits to at risk children. The women and child protection teams have halted their activities including meetings.”* Tanzania

Respondents reported a lack of co-ordination for active and prompt response. At the same time, there is an overall problem of suspension of activities in the sphere of identification and protection of the at-risk populations.

#### **6. DIFFICULTIES IN PROVIDING ASSISTANCE AND REFERRAL OF VOTs**

The accessibility of service provision has been affected by the implementation of national measures related

to COVID-19, such as social distancing and lockdown measures. This results in a reduction in access to services for VoTs, survivors and at-risk groups. This particularly impacts the provision of sheltered accommodation (as some shelters are not allowed to accept new beneficiaries, despite having sufficient capacity). In addition, there are more barriers in referral of clients\ beneficiaries to relevant organizations. Potential clients are often isolated and sometimes do not have access to contact the relevant agencies for assistance via the Internet and mobile phone.

#### **7. INSUFFICIENT AVAILABILITY OF BASIC RESOURCES AND SERVICES FOR AT-RISK GROUPS DURING THE PANDEMIC**

The respondents identified at-risk groups as including unaccompanied minors, migrants, homeless people, people with housing difficulties, victims of domestic violence and people in the sex industry. The lack of access to sheltered accommodation was particularly highlighted, as it increases vulnerability of at-risk groups to trafficking. For example, it was reported that unaccompanied minors have had to stay in police stations for longer periods due to unavailability of sheltered accommodation due to implementation of measures in response to COVID-19. In addition, lack of access to food, water, PPE, medical care and living conditions that do not allow social distancing measures were reported.

*“The mandatory 14-day ‘quarantine’ that is imposed on people (general population, families, unaccompanied minors) upon their arrival in Greece through the islands takes place at the shores where the migrant boats first arrive. There are difficulties with protective custody of unaccompanied minors in police stations, where the hygiene standards are too poor and the minors stay for extended time periods, since the shelters do not accept new cases.”* Greece

*“They are many victims placed in shelters in which they can’t follow the social distancing guidelines.”* Germany

#### **8. LACK OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

Another significant barrier to the work of respondents is insufficient information about the evolving *modus*

operandi of other organizations and government institutions and availability of resources, as well as any changes to the functioning of NRMs and equivalent systems due to national measures implemented related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

*“There are only general instructions and guidelines passed through emails and zoom calls.”* India

*“Issues around communications being received by the relevant individual/team in government agencies and lack of clear information and updates on changes to processes and procedures.”* Great Britain

*“To date, the Ministry of the Interior has not provided common procedures for quarantine housing, use of devices for contact units or ad hoc financing.”* Italy

## 9. INSUFFICIENT FUNDING AVAILABLE FOR NGOS

Survey respondents reported that the resources of their organizations have become more limited. Some allocated funds are now unavailable, and the funding provided by governments has decreased. As a result, certain projects and activities have stopped. At the same time, respondents reported having an increase in requests for their services, especially those requiring immediate response. This demonstrates that NGOs have been filling the gaps in governmental capacity due to emerging pandemic-related needs and newly-implemented measures.

*“Aid and benefits to meet the urgent needs of the population from the public administration have been slow, paralyzing and/or overloading existing ones (difficulty in contacting social services, saturation of employment offices, etc.) and taking time to articulate the specific ones for this emergency context. The response to these needs, which have required an immediate response, have been covered by private initiative, the civilian population and the third sector.”* Spain

## 10. MULTIDISCIPLINARY APPROACH AND CO-ORDINATION

Some difficulties related to intergovernmental co-ordination and co-operation between governmental institutions, NGOs and IGOs were reported by respondents, regardless of measures related to the pandemic. Problems in co-operation with governmental institutions have resulted in delays in administrative procedures, service provision to VoTs and at-risk groups, and identification of VoTs, as well as ineffective prevention efforts.

However, some respondents reported having effective co-operation, which further improved in the period of implementation of measures related to the pandemic.

*“We have co-operated very well with the municipalities in providing food and sanitary packages and study materials for children for 800 families in 9 municipalities of Albania. During this time, the municipalities have been much more open to co-operation and co-ordination”* Albania

*“There have been difficulties around identification of survivors, immediate safeguarding and assistance, but overall, the NGO has been able to work well with government agencies to overcome barriers experienced, ensure that survivors have received initial safeguarding and support needed, including the provision of extra food parcels and technology”.* Great Britain

## D. MID-TERM RESPONSE TO ADDRESS TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS

Respondents provided their perspective on necessary measures to be implemented by governments to combat trafficking in human beings post COVID-19 pandemic. The majority of respondents who took part in the research believe there is a need to develop a national protocol on prevention of trafficking in human beings and protection of the human rights of victims and survivors of trafficking during states of emergency, including pandemics (N=307, 79.7 per cent). Only 9.1 per cent (N=35) stated that there are such national protocols in

their countries.<sup>7</sup> Less than 5 per cent think that there is no need to develop such national protocols (N=18).

Other suggested mid-term responses can be divided into four thematic groups:

## **1. DEVELOP AND STRENGTHEN NATIONAL LEGISLATION AIMED AT COMBATING TRAFFICKING IN HUMAN BEINGS AND ENSURING A VICTIM CENTERED, GENDER-SENSITIVE AND HUMAN RIGHTS-BASED APPROACH DURING AND POST-COVID 19**

- a. Strengthen national legislation in the sphere of combating trafficking in human beings (special laws, operational protocols, identification procedures);
- b. Provide assistance and protection to VoTs and survivors, irrespective of their agreement to co-operate with law enforcement agencies;
- c. Implement independent mechanisms to monitor national anti-trafficking efforts, including data collection and reporting systems;
- d. Improve international co-operation in combating trafficking in human beings;
- e. Improve international and national law enforcement co-operation, interagency co-operation including where relevant NGOs, media, private sector, medical organizations, transportation companies; and
- f. Develop appropriate reporting mechanisms for VoTs to reflect constraints to reporting during states of emergency.

*“Our state needs...to increase access to justice for victims of trafficking.”* Albania

*“We need effective operating protocols in agreement with non-governmental organizations.”* Italy

*“We need modern slavery supply chain legislation which has penalties (and therefore is enforceable) and an independent body/person to oversee implementation.”*  
Australia

## **2. AMENDMENTS TO LEGISLATION AND POLICY AND STRENGTHENED DEMOCRATIC INSTITUTIONS**

Government should effectively combat trafficking in human beings by addressing the demand dynamics amplified by COVID-19, which will likely remain post-recovery, as well as any other emergency that exacerbates people’s vulnerability to trafficking and exploitation.

- a. Strengthen legislation and policies related to social welfare, child and youth protection, gender-based violence and migration;
- b. Increase minimum sentencing provisions for trafficking in human beings-related offenses;
- c. Ensure consistent and equitable access to administrative, civil and criminal justice for VoTs and survivors and prioritize and resource the work of law enforcement in the field of combating trafficking in human beings;
- d. Strengthen efforts on a national level to fight corruption;
- e. Strengthening the capacity for proactive identification of civil society working on combating trafficking in human beings at all levels (training, experience exchange, funding) post COVID-19;
- f. Adopt legislation focused on increasing sentencing for traffickers and addressing demand in the sex industry that fuels THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation;
- g. Prioritize the prosecution of the sex trafficking crime, both online and offline;

---

<sup>7</sup> Albania, Bangladesh, Colombia, Czech Republic, Ecuador, Georgia, Germany, Ghana, India, Israel, Myanmar/Burma, Nepal, Nigeria, Peru, Philippines, Portugal, Romania, Switzerland, the United States and Uzbekistan.

- h. Address the demand for trafficking for labour exploitation through adopting measures such as effective implementation of the national labour legislation, ensuring safe and effective pathways to legal labour migration, strengthening and resourcing labour inspectorates, as well as implementation of penalties for unethical recruitment and labour exploitation; and
- i. Ensure transparency in supply chains.

*“Abolition of prostitution law, criminalize the demand and purchase of bodies for sexual purposes. Create awareness campaigns and close physical and digital spaces that promote the sexual exploitation of people such as pornographic pages or forums where prostitutes are recommended.”* Spain

*“Tighten the punishment for those who recruit, exploit, sell those who, due to economic problems, find themselves unemployed in the labor market and become a good target for traffickers.”* Kazakhstan

*“Reinforce the capacity of the border agency to detect trafficking cases.”* Central African Republic

*“Introduce a criminalization of sex purchase - focusing on the “clients” rather than the persons in prostitution. A reduction of demand will reduce the supply of victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.”* Germany

*“Ensure channels for legal labour migration are in place for sectors typically filled by migrants, e.g., agriculture, in-home care, construction.”* Austria

*“Doing much more to reduce the demand for prostitution with the penalty to the pimps, the closure of private apartments where it is exercised, etc.”* Spain

*“Traffickers are protected on one side and the processes are not punished, which makes combatting trafficking and exploitation even more difficult.”* Colombia

### 3. OVERALL PREVENTION MEASURES TARGETED AT AT-RISK GROUPS

Government should continue to sustainably address the root factors exacerbating the vulnerability of groups at-risk of trafficking in human beings.

- a. Implement sustainable development goals to mitigate economic, social, educational and gender inequality, as well as investing in measures to contribute to economic development of the country; and
- b. Ensure basic needs of at-risk groups are met post COVID-19, such as access to employment, childcare, food and accommodation, information and easily accessible social services.

*“Improve preventive measures within social services, ensure access to education, ensure gender equality. In my view, governments must ensure that recovery measures address the special needs of vulnerable groups, in order to prevent them from being exploited.”* Sweden

*“The government should ensure that the people who lost jobs due to the pandemic will be able to access employment or be provided with a source of income until the situation has normalized since lack of financial security to provide for their families makes people vulnerable to be trafficked.”* Philippines

*“Before, during and after COVID-19, we recommend more awareness that sex trafficking often occurs under the guise of consensual sex work. Any level of education around this misconception can be beneficial; this includes online and in-person sex work.”* United States

### 4. PREVENTIVE EFFORTS TARGETED AT THE GENERAL POPULATION

- a. Launch awareness raising campaigns on preventing and identifying trafficking in human beings targeted at the tourism sector;
- b. Implement measures to support employers through training on recruitment and selection

processes that prevent trafficking in human beings;

- c. Develop preventive measures online to protect children and youth from grooming and recruitment, as well as age appropriate awareness raising activities for children and youth on the topic; and
- d. Undertake research post pandemic, to further identify at-risk groups and their needs based on empirical data.

*“There have been no public campaigns in our country for years. There is an urgent need to create public awareness, preferably through TV, to bring about a basic understanding of the problem. Human trafficking is a very complex phenomenon and people do not understand what it is really about - it is not clear to them terminologically, let alone beyond that. First of all, it is not clear to victims and potential victims - there are refugee women, asylum seekers, women who have been in a vulnerable situation all their lives, neglected, in children’s homes and the like. After a broad campaign, training should be organized for certain categories of professional services. Be sure to educate what is different for women and men in human trafficking.”* Croatia

*“We need to give substance to the problem of trafficking, ordinary people do not perceive trafficking as a problem because they do not know about it, it is not something that concerns them. Ordinary people don’t know that behind the Nigerian boy who asks for money when you put the shopping cart away there is a criminal group. We must involve public opinion at all levels.”* Italy

In addition, according to the respondents, national governments need to demonstrate their commitment to combating trafficking in human beings through provision of sufficient funding and resources. The emerging trends, such as recruitment and trafficking for online exploitation, as well as the consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic, especially the economic downturn leading to the exacerbation of vulnerabilities of at-risk groups, need to be addressed by governments in their post-COVID 19 anti-trafficking response.

*“First of all, governments must show their determination to continue to fight human trafficking (including financially!) Despite the possible economic crisis, in no case should control mechanisms be weakened.”* Kyrgyzstan

*“Having the political will to eradicate human trafficking ..... We must think that after the COVID-19 pandemic, the economic crisis will make people with few resources more vulnerable and more exposed to being deceived by the mafia into trafficking in persons.”* Argentina

According to respondents, prevention efforts and protection of VoTs and survivors require prioritization by governments during and post-COVID-19 pandemic through implementation of concrete and reflective responses. This will result in an overall decrease in both demand for VoTs and supply of VoTs.



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

This survey found that social, psychological and legal services, as well as sheltered accommodation are provided to victims and survivors of trafficking in human beings in the majority of countries represented in the survey. The accessibility of other services essential for rehabilitation, reintegration and protection of victims varied across countries, including substance dependency treatment, long-term accommodation, assistance with employment, professional education or skill training, and witness protection. Overall, OSCE states with NRMs or equivalent systems tend to have more accessible rehabilitation and reintegration services for VoTs in comparison with non-OSCE countries (Figure 2). Altogether, this research reveals some important findings that should be taken into consideration as states and NRMs move beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to measures put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic:

- a. Governments' capacity to combat trafficking in human beings has been impacted. This impact is particularly evident in the following areas: identification procedures, sheltered accommodation and social services.
- b. The proper functioning of NRMs or equivalent systems has also been affected. Approximately half of countries currently have a partially operational NRM or equivalent system.
- c. It has become more difficult for victims and survivors to access rehabilitation services, administrative procedures and protection in the overwhelming majority of countries (Figures 10, 11).
- d. Respondents are experiencing challenges in the areas of interagency co-operation, additional funding requirements (Figures 6,7), emerging additional needs (protective equipment, special requirements for shelters, etc.) and increasing vulnerabilities of at-risk groups. Taking into account the combination of these factors, additional measures to prevent trafficking are required during states of emergency.
- e. Online services are underutilized by organizations providing assistance to victims and survivors of trafficking (Figure 4). Victims and survivors of trafficking can access NGOs and IGOs mostly by phone. While traffickers have been able to quickly adapt their activities to the online sphere during the COVID-19 pandemic, government agencies and civil society have had difficulty doing so.
- f. There is an increased vulnerability to recruitment by traffickers online. Respondents also reported increased vulnerability of women and girls to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation (women – in physical locations, girls – online) and trafficking of men and boys for the purpose of exploitation in criminal activities (men – labour exploitation, boys – forced begging). Emerging trafficking dynamics are gendered and further exacerbated by preexisting gender inequality issues.
- g. Girls face increased vulnerability to trafficking in human beings for the purpose of sexual exploitation online (webcam, pornography, etc.) and forced marriage. Boys were reported to be more vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of criminal activities and forced begging.
- h. Vulnerability of children to trafficking has increased, which requires the preparedness of all stakeholders to provide additional services for trafficked children as a result.
- i. Operation of shelters for VoTs has been significantly impacted. A quarter of all shelters, despite having sufficient spaces, are not allowed to accept new beneficiaries. This may pose additional risks of secondary victimization, as it leads to decreased accessibility of safe accommodation.
- j. Beneficiaries of anti-trafficking organizations may have additional needs and organizations

- require additional funding to manage the pandemic's mid- to long-term consequences for combating trafficking in human beings. Additional funding is needed to support NGOs working in the sphere of trafficking in human beings both in the current situation and in the future (Figures 6,7).
- k. Administrative and legal procedures related to VoTs have slowed, decreased accessibility to governmental institutions, which results in additional challenges in interagency co-operation. Some stakeholders involved in combating trafficking in human beings were reassigned to pandemic-related responses, which is an additional challenge in interagency co-operation with NGOs, international organizations, governmental institutions and law enforcement agencies.
  - l. Post pandemic, governments need to undertake measures to address demand for trafficking in human beings in the areas of legislation, prevention and strengthening of anti-trafficking frameworks.
  - m. More efforts are needed to mitigate the consequences of the pandemic on at-risk groups vulnerable to trafficking in human beings (migrants, unaccompanied minors, etc.) and those whose vulnerability has been exacerbated due to the subsequent economic downturn.
  - n. The majority of the respondents expressed a strong interest in the development of a national protocol on prevention of trafficking in human beings and protection of the human rights of victims and survivors of trafficking during states of emergency, including pandemics.

# APPENDIX – SURVEY QUESTIONS

## SURVEY OF FRONTLINE STAKEHOLDERS

### Opening:

We would like to learn more about the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on your organizations and their beneficiaries. We acknowledge that many of you are currently in very difficult situations and we highly appreciate your time and effort in completing this survey. The survey data will be utilized to draft policy recommendations to address immediate and mid-term consequences of COVID 19 on combatting trafficking in human beings and ensuring human rights of survivors and victims of trafficking. The survey will take approximately 30 minutes and all of your responses will remain confidential.

### I. PROFILE QUESTIONS

#### Please choose the response that best describes your current position: (Choose one.)

- Non-governmental Organization (NGO)
- NGO Management
- NGO Support Staff
- Intergovernmental Organization Staff (IGO)
- OSCE Field Operation Staff
- Other – please identify (text box)

Please provide name, title, institution, address and e-mail:

---

---

#### Respondent Country

Respondent Country definition box (country where the respondent is currently working)

---

#### How long have you worked on counter-trafficking issues? (Choose one.)

- Less than one year
- 1 to 2 years
- 3 to 5 years
- 6 to 10 years
- More than 10 years

#### What is your age? (Choose one.)

- 18 to 34
- 35 to 50
- 51 to 65
- 66+

#### What is your gender? (Choose one.)

- Female
- Male
- Prefer to self-describe (text box)

---

Prefer not to say

## II. CONTROL QUESTIONS ON NRMS AND EQUITABLE SYSTEMS

**Due to national measures implemented related to COVID 19 pandemic, is the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) or its equitable system operational?**

1. Fully operational
2. Partially operational due to national measures implemented related to COVID 19
3. Not operational
4. There is no National Referral Mechanism (NRM) or its equitable system
5. I don't know

**Which services are available to victims and survivors of trafficking in your country overall? Please select all that apply**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Medical Services			
Psychological Services			
Substance Abuse Treatment			
Social Services			
Legal Services			
Sheltered Accommodation			
Long-term accommodation			
Reflection and Recovery Period			
Regularization of migration status including, asylum application, temporary and permanent residence permits			
Financial assistance			
Compensation			
Professional education or skill training			
Assistance with employment			
Return to the country of origin			
Family reunification			
Witness protection			
Other			

### III. TARGET GROUPS AND TYPES OF SERVICES

**In what areas does your organization work to address human trafficking (please select all that apply):**

1. Direct service assistance to victims or survivors of trafficking without shelter accommodation
  2. Direct service assistance to victims or survivors of trafficking with shelter accommodation
  3. Outreach to at risk groups, including victims of trafficking
  4. Prevention and/or awareness raising
  5. Lobbying and/or advocacy
  6. Research
  7. Other
- 

**Please select the target groups you work with (please select all that apply):**

1. Survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation
  2. Survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation
  3. Survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of criminal activities
  4. Survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of begging
  5. Survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage
  6. Child survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation
  7. Child survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation
  8. Child survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of criminal activities
  9. Child survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of begging
  10. Child survivors and/or victims of trafficking for the purpose of child marriage
  11. Children of migrants
  12. Unaccompanied children
  13. Street children
  14. Homeless people
  15. People with alcohol or substance dependencies
  16. People in prostitution
  17. Domestic violence victims
  18. Regular labour migrants
  19. Internally displaced people (IDPs)
  20. Asylum Seekers
  21. Refugees
  22. Irregular migrants
  23. Other
-

**Which types of services do you provide to your beneficiaries (please select all that apply):**

Type of Service	Adults	Children
Medical Services		
Psychological Services		
Social Services		
Substance Dependency Treatment		
Legal Services		
Sheltered Accommodation		
Regularization of migration status including, asylum application, temporary and permanent residence permits		
Financial assistance		
Education or skill training		
Provision of Legal Guardian (only applicable to children)		
Return to the country of origin		
Family reunification		
Witness protection		
Other		

**Due to measures implemented related to COVID 19 pandemic, has your organization experienced any additional difficulties in accessing the following for your beneficiaries (please select all that apply):**

1. Identification procedures
2. Referral to NRMs or equitable mechanisms
3. Sheltered accommodation
4. Non-sheltered accommodation
5. Psychological services
6. Medical services
7. Legal services
8. Social services
9. Interpretation services
10. Regularization of migration status
11. Other: specify

---

**How does your organization currently operate?**

1. Staff are working remotely; assistance is provided online or over the phone
  2. Staff are all working in the office/shelter
  3. Staff are working on a rotational basis in the office/shelter
  4. Staff are not working
  5. Other
- 

**During the implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic, beneficiaries can access the services of your organization via (please select all that apply):**

1. Hotline
  2. Telephone
  3. Website
  4. Email
  5. Facebook
  6. Instagram
  7. Telephone apps
  8. Skype/Zoom/WebEx
  9. Other (specify)
- 

**What are currently the main sources of funding for your organization/work?**

1. Government
  2. International organizations
  3. Domestic private foundations
  4. International private foundations
  5. Corporate/business donations
  6. Private donations
  7. Other
- 

**Does your organization currently require additional funding to address needs resulting from COVID 19 pandemic?**

1. Yes
1. No

**Will your organization require additional funding to address needs resulting from COVID 19 pandemic in the next 12 months?**

1. Yes
2. No

**If your organization does not receive the required funding in 2020-2021:**

1. It will remain fully operational
2. It will remain partially operational
3. It will close
4. I don't know

#### IV. CHANGES IN HUMAN TRAFFICKING DYNAMICS: TRENDS, AT RISK GROUPS

**In your experience, what human trafficking crime tendencies have emerged due to COVID 19 pandemic:**

	Increased	No Change	Decreased	Does not apply
In person recruitment by human traffickers				
Online recruitment by human traffickers				
Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in physical locations				
Trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation online (webcam, pornography, etc.)				
Trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation				
Trafficking for the purpose of criminal activities				
Trafficking for the purpose of begging				
Trafficking for the purpose of adoption				
Trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage				
Other (Please explain)				

**In your experience, which groups are currently more vulnerable to recruitment and exploitation by traffickers during the COVID-19 pandemic?**

	Men	Women	Girls	Boys
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in physical locations				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation online (webcam, pornography, etc.)				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of criminal activities				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of begging				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage				
Other (Please explain)				



**In your experience, which groups will be more vulnerable to recruitment and exploitation by traffickers' post COVID-19 pandemic?**

	Men	Women	Girls	Boys
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation in physical locations				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation online (webcam, pornography, etc.)				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of criminal activities				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of begging				
Victims of trafficking for the purpose of forced marriage				
Other (Please explain)				

**In your experience or based on reports to your organization, which additional difficulties are survivors of human trafficking experiencing as a result of implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic:**

1. Difficulty in accessing food and water
2. Difficulty in accessing National Referral Mechanism and equitable systems
3. Isolation
4. Loss of employment
5. Restricted access to services
6. Restricted access to information
7. Domestic violence
8. Financial abuse
9. Lack of childcare
10. Other (please explain:

---

**In your experience or based on reports to your organization, which additional difficulties are victims of human trafficking experiencing as a result of implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic:**

1. Increased violence by traffickers
2. Difficulty in accessing food and water
3. Engagement in riskier behaviour to continue earning money for the trafficker
4. Increasing debt
5. Difficulty in accessing National Referral Mechanism and equitable systems
6. Difficulty in accessing sheltered accommodation
7. Difficulty in accessing medical services
8. Difficulty in accessing NGOs and/or hotlines
9. Other ((please explain:

---

## V. IMPACT OF COVID 19 ON SERVICES

**In your experience or based on reports to your organization, the number of identified victims of trafficking during the COVID 19 pandemic has:**

1. Increased
2. Not changed
3. Decreased
4. I don't know

**In your experience or based on reports to your organization, due to the implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic, the time necessary to complete statutory procedures for identification of victims of trafficking has:**

1. Increased
2. Not changed
3. Decreased
4. I don't know

**Have your beneficiaries experienced changes in procedure, delays or postponements in their administrative, criminal or civil cases due to the implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic?**

1. Yes (If yes, please explain further below.)
2. No
3. Does not apply
4. I don't know

**After the implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic, requests for service/assistance to your organization have:**

1. Increased
2. Not changed
3. Decreased
4. I don't know

**In comparison to the situation prior to COVID 19 pandemic, how much more difficult or easier is it for your beneficiaries to access the following:**

	Signifi- cantly easier	Some- what easier	No change	Some- what more difficult	Signif- icantly more difficult	Don't know/ Does not apply
Access to Employment						
Access to Food and Water						
Access to a safe accommodation						
Access to psychological services						
Access to medical services (especially, primary doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, COVID 19 testing)						
Access to social services						
Access to legal assistance						
Access to interpreters						
Access to childcare						
Access to assistance for domestic violence or any other form of abuse						
Ability to return to the country of origin/citizenship						
Access to administrative procedures (processing of asylum claims, temporary residence permit process, permanent residence permit process, work permit process, regularization of stay during COVID 19, etc.)						
Access to information						
Anything additional not mentioned above: _____						

**Please evaluate the availability of protective equipment against COVID 19 for the staff of your organization (such as masks, gloves, sanitizers, soap, etc.):**

1. Fully available to all staff
2. Mostly available to majority of staff
3. Somewhat available to some staff
4. Mostly unavailable to majority of staff
5. Not available

**Please evaluate the availability of protective equipment against COVID 19 for the beneficiaries of your organization (such as masks, gloves, sanitizers, soap, etc.):**

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| 1. Fully available to all beneficiaries          | 4. Mostly unavailable to majority of beneficiaries |
| 2. Mostly available to majority of beneficiaries | 5. Not available                                   |
| 3. Somewhat available to some beneficiaries      |  |

**In your experience or based on reports to your organization, have new beneficiary needs emerged as a result of the implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic?**

- Yes (If yes, please explain further below.)
- No

## VI. CHILDREN AT RISK OF TRAFFICKING

**Does your organization work with child trafficking survivors or victims?**

- Yes
- No

**Which services are available to child victims and survivors of trafficking in your country? (Please select all that apply)**

	Yes	No	Don't know
Medical Services			
Psychological Services			
Social Services			
Substance Abuse Treatment			
Legal Services			
Sheltered Accommodation			
Reflection and Recovery Period			
Regularization of migration status including, asylum application, temporary and permanent residence permits			
Financial assistance			
Compensation			
Education or skill training			
Provision of Legal Guardian			
Return to the country of origin			
Family reunification			
Witness protection			
Other			

**Due to measures implemented related to COVID 19 pandemic, the national child protection system is:**

- |  |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| 1. Fully operational   | 3. Not operational |
| 2. Partially operational due to measures implemented related to COVID 19 | 4. I don't know    |

**Have your child beneficiaries experienced changes in procedure, delays or postponements in the appointment of legal guardians due to the implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic?**

- |  |                   |
|--|-------------------|
| 1. Yes (If yes, please explain further below.) | 3. Does not apply |
| 2. No  | 4. I don't know   |

**In your opinion, can you evaluate the potential vulnerability to trafficking for the following categories of children post COVID 19 pandemic:**

	Increased vulnerability	No change	Decreased vulnerability	I don't know
Children of those with alcohol or substance dependency				
Street children				
Children victims of abuse				
Children residing in state or private care institutions				
Children leaving state or private care institutions (including foster care)				
Children of migrants				
Stateless children/internally displaced/undocumented children				
Unaccompanied children				
Other				

**VII. SHELTERS**

**Does your organization provide sheltered accommodation for survivors and victims of trafficking?**

1. Yes
  2. No
- If no skip logic

**During implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic, the requests for sheltered accommodation to your organization:**

- |              |                 |
|--------------|-----------------|
| 1. Increased | 3. Decreased    |
| 2. No change | 4. I don't know |

**During implementation of measures related to COVID 19 pandemic, the sheltered accommodation has:**

- |   |                        |
|---|------------------------|
| 1. Sufficient spaces  | 3. Insufficient spaces |
| 2. Sufficient spaces, but does not accept new beneficiaries | 4. Closed its premises |
|   | 5. I don't know        |

## VIII. INTERAGENCY COORDINATION AND COOPERATION

**Are there difficulties in your coordination and cooperation with government agencies due to the implementation of national measures related to COVID 19 pandemic?**

1. Yes (Please explain)
2. No

## IX. MID-TERM APPROACHES

**In your view, is there a need to develop a national protocol on prevention of human trafficking and protection of the human rights of victims and survivors of trafficking during states of emergency, including pandemics?**

1. Yes
  2. No, we already have such national protocol
  3. No, we do not need such national protocol
  4. Other
- 

**If you have promising practices to contribute on how can the different needs of women, men girls and boys victims or at risk of trafficking be better addressed during the COVID 19 pandemic, including links to websites, articles, etc.. please share them below:**

1. In your view, what measures can governments implement to prevent trafficking for labour exploitation during and post COVID 19 pandemic?
2. In your view, what measures can governments implement to prevent trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation during and post COVID 19 pandemic?
3. In your view, what measures can governments undertake to address demand for trafficking post COVID 19 pandemic? (Explanation box: Article 9 of the UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime: " States Parties shall adopt or strengthen legislative or other measures, such as educational, social or cultural measures, including through bilateral and multilateral cooperation, to discourage the demand that fosters all forms of exploitation of persons, especially women and children, that leads to trafficking"? )
4. If you have additional comments regarding the current work of your organization or emerging human trafficking trends during COVID 19 pandemic, please include them in the space below:

---

---

Thank you for taking this survey! We will make sure that the voices of civil society organizations and IGO stakeholders are reflected in the development of policy recommendations to address immediate and mid-term consequences of COVID 19 on combatting trafficking in human beings and ensuring human rights of survivors and victims of trafficking.

# **ANNEX II**

## **Survey of Survivors of Trafficking Summary Report**

# METHODOLOGY

This study is based on a convenience sample<sup>1</sup> of survivors and victims of human trafficking. For the purpose of this survey, victims of trafficking (VoTs) are defined as those individuals who are currently in situations of trafficking in human beings. A total of 94 study respondents, all survivors of human trafficking, were recruited from ODIHR and UN Women databases and networks, as well as through distribution on social media platforms. The respondents, who were directly contacted by ODIHR and UN Women staff, as well as those conducting the research, disseminated the survey within their professional networks directly targeting known survivors of human trafficking. In addition, staff of frontline stakeholders' organizations distributed the announcement to known survivors. Respondents also had the opportunity to distribute the announcement within their network. The data was collected between 27 April and 18 May 2020.

Background information about the survey and its objectives was shared with all relevant respondents and distributed on social media platforms, with a link to the online survey platform on which the data was collected. The link transferred respondents to a website, where further information about the survey organizers, its purpose, and the possibility to give or withhold consent to participate was provided. In addition, links to information about where individuals could seek assistance was placed on each survey page. Respondents were able to select from 25 languages (including Albanian, Amharic, Arabic, Bosnian, Chinese, Croatian, English, French, German, Hindi, Indonesian, Italian, Kazakh, Kyrgyz, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Spanish, Thai, Turkish, Ukrainian, Uzbek [Cyrillic and Latin], Vietnamese and Yoruba) to view the questions and answers, as well as to respond to open questions.

Safety and ethics protocols were put in place for informed consent and the security of survivors. The survey provided clarification that survivors could stop answering the survey at any time. Resources linking to anti-trafficking organizations providing services, as well as domestic violence hotlines were provided and available in every page. A quick exit button was also added to each page should the survivor find her or himself needing to quickly move to another page.

In comparison with a recent ODIHR survey of survivors, which was carried out in 2019 with the same methodology, the response rate was around half: in the previous report 188 survivors answered some questions. The lower participation rate may be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and related mitigation measures, leading to reduced internet access, service providers, or related issues experienced by survivors of trafficking during this period. However, overall respondents' characteristics remained consistent. A majority of respondents to both surveys were women and survivors of trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation. People living in North America represented the highest percentage of respondents as a geographical group.

Statistical data analysis included descriptive statistics and, whenever possible, comparisons were made through disaggregating data by a) sex; b) geographic location; and c) survivors in locations with and without COVID-19 pandemic response measure, such as social distancing or limitations in movement was made using both Chi-squared and Fisher's Exact testing.<sup>2</sup> The survey was formulated using mostly close-ended questions. This could lead to a limited understanding of respondents' opinions and experience or to misinterpretation of

---

1 Convenience sampling is a non-probability sampling technique where subjects are selected because of their convenient accessibility and proximity to the researcher. Survivors of trafficking in human beings make up a hard-to-reach population and no full list of survivors exist. Therefore, only those survivors who are in contact with different services or have other connections with researchers had the opportunity to participate in the study.

2 In order to check whether differences between those categories reflect differences existing in reality or appeared by chance, relevant statistical criteria were applied, including the Chi-squared test and Fisher's Exact test. All statistically significant differences found are presented in the text. Some non-significant differences (e.g., most sex disaggregated data) might also be presented for readers' convenience with being marked as insignificant.



some answers. However, this limitation was partially mitigated by including several open-ended questions and a field to add further information in the closed questions.

## A. SAMPLE

In total, 94 survivors of trafficking in human beings from 40 different countries participated in the study, of which the highest percentage represented the United States of America (n=15; 16 per cent), Canada (n=10; 11 per cent) and South Africa (n=11; 12 per cent). After the official data collection period, one more respondent completed the survey. In total, respondents from 41 countries participated in the research, from which responses from 40 countries were analyzed in total.<sup>3</sup> No country was represented by more than five respondents. Overall, 28.4 per cent of respondents were from Europe, 34.1 per cent from North and Latin America, 21.6 per cent from Asia and 15.9 per cent from Africa. More than half of respondents were either citizens of or currently located in the OSCE region<sup>4</sup> (n=55; 58.5 per cent). Respondents from 13 different OSCE participating States participated in the study: Armenia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Canada, Denmark, France, Hungary, Ireland, Kyrgyzstan, Russia, North Macedonia, the United States and the United Kingdom.

Respondents were predominantly women (n=79; 84 per cent, men: n=15; 16 per cent), 35 to 50 years old (n=44; 48 per cent) or 35 to 18 years old (n=35; 38 per cent). While the respondents could select the categories of “male, female and other”, the other category was not selected by any respondents. As survivors identifying only as either men or women participated in the survey, the analysis of gender disaggregated data is based on their answers. The male sample size of respondents was significantly smaller than the female sample size of respondents. The majority of respondents were trafficked for sexual exploitation (n=93; 99 per cent), but also simultaneously or subsequently for other types of trafficking, including for the purpose of labor exploitation (n=27; 29 per cent), criminal activity (n=11, 12 per cent) and forced marriage (n=8, 9 per cent). While participating in the study the majority of respondents were in the country of their citizenship (n=68; 72 per cent), while a fifth of the respondents (n=19) reported being in another country. Seven percent of respondents (n=7) preferred not to provide information about their citizenship and/or geographical location.

The survey assessed the gender dimensions of trafficking in human beings, particularly in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, through a direct question regarding the respondent’s perception of the impact of COVID-19 on different genders.

---

3 The additional response, with the exception of Tajikistan, was included in the survey report analysis.

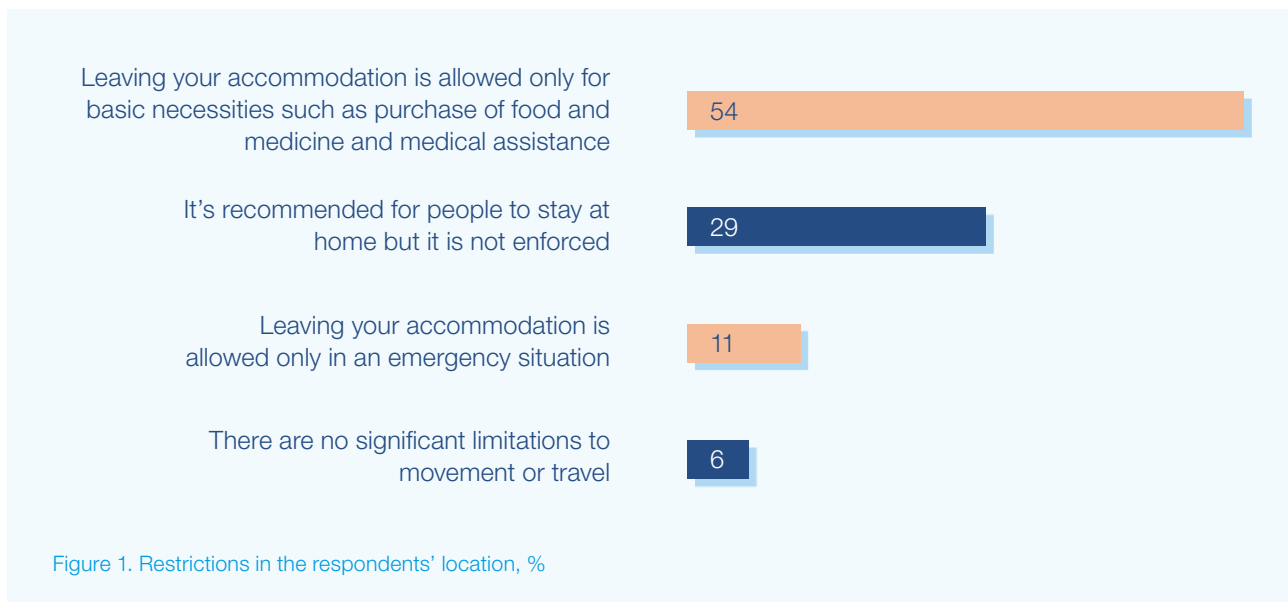
4 The Organization comprises 57 participating States that span the globe, encompassing three continents - North America, Europe and Asia - and more than a billion people. The OSCE has 57 participating States from Europe, Central Asia and North America: Albania, Andorra, Armenia, Austria, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Canada, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Georgia, Germany, Greece, Holy See, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Moldova, Monaco, Mongolia, Montenegro, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Russian Federation, San Marino, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Tajikistan, Turkey, Turkmenistan, Ukraine, United Kingdom, United States and Uzbekistan.

# RESEARCH FINDINGS

## A. CHANGES IN LIFE SITUATIONS DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

The majority of respondents at the time of the study were in the location where movement was significantly (54.3 per cent) or almost totally restricted (10.6 per cent) (Figure 1), and services were mostly (45 per cent) or partially (41 per cent) closed.

Overall, approximately one quarter of respondents (n=26; 27 per cent) were personally affected by the COVID-19 pandemic from which: 14 per cent were personally experiencing the symptoms of the disease; 14 per cent were tested for COVID-19 ;12 per cent were in contact with someone diagnosed with the disease; or 8 per cent taking care of a person with the disease. Two people (2 per cent) from the sample were diagnosed with COVID-19.



The areas of life survivors reported being most negatively affected by the pandemic were psychological and financial well-being (Figure 2a,2b). Around 70 per cent of the respondents reported a negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on these aspects of their lives, while 38 per cent of survivors reported significantly worse financial wellbeing compared to the situation prior to the pandemic. Some of the respondents reported positive changes as the result of the lockdown (see quote below), but overall respondents reported a worsening of their mental health condition. Sex disaggregated data is presented in figure 2a.

*I am happy to have more peace of mind and better air because fewer cars drive and hardly any airplanes.*  
Female survivor from Germany

Commenting on the deterioration of her psychological state, one survivor referred to the COVID-19 pandemic as a PTSD triggering factor:

*I think the biggest issue for me as a survivor of human trafficking and COVID19, is the PTSD. We are living in unprecedented times and while we are 'in the life', everything is chaos. There are a lot of parallels that influence my increased depression and anxiety.* Female survivor from the United States

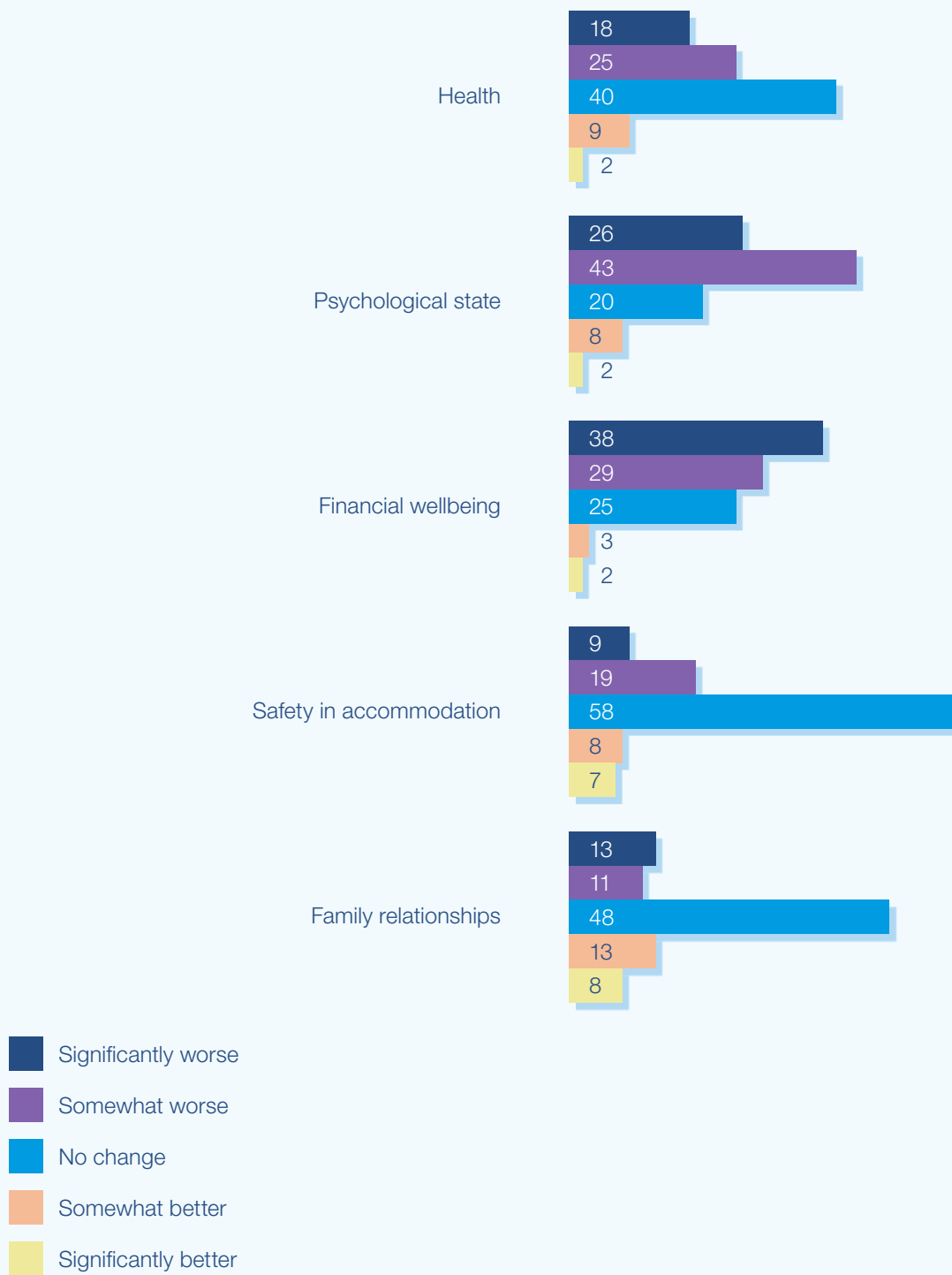


Figure 2a. Self-reported changes in life situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic, %

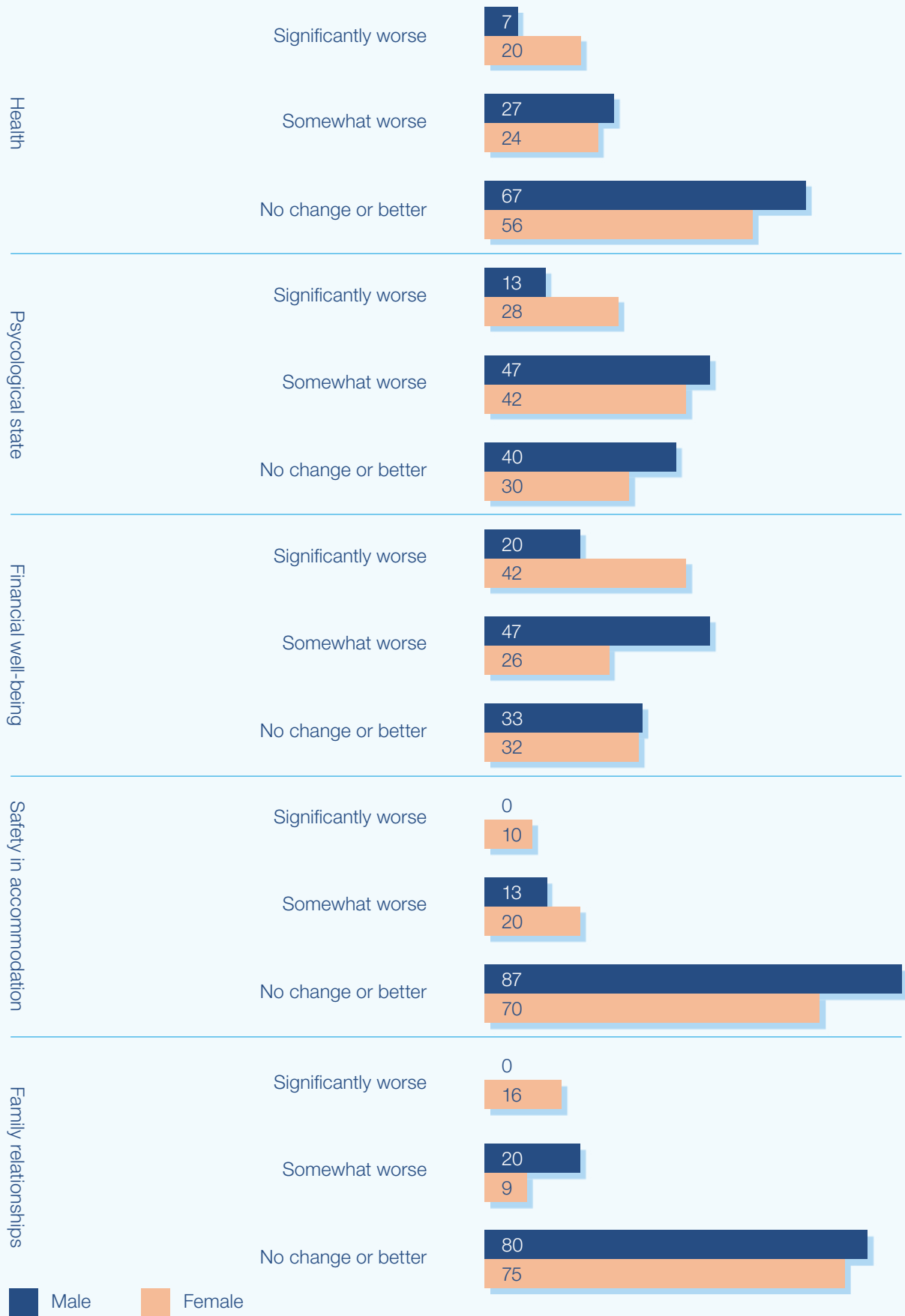


Figure 2b. Self-reported changes in life situation due to the COVID-19 pandemic among male and female survivors, %

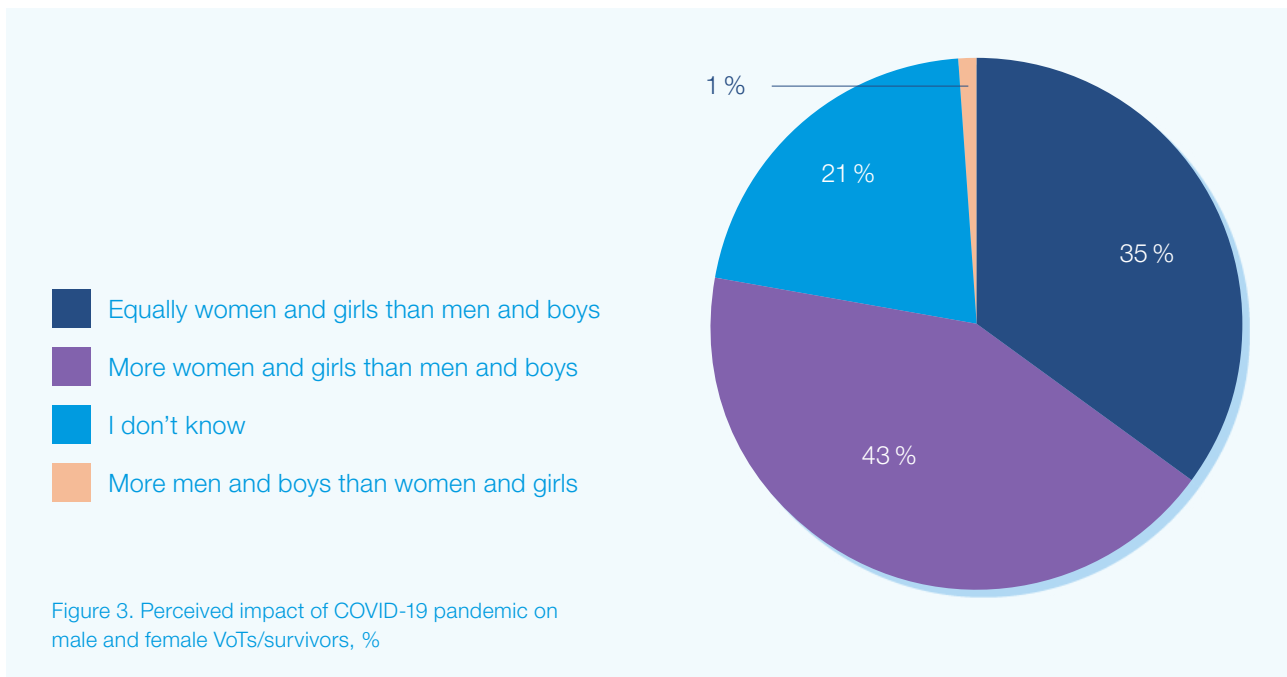
Physical health was also negatively affected in 42.5 per cent of cases; however, more than half of respondents have not experienced any changes in this sphere or even felt better due to the implementation of measures related to the COVID-19 pandemic. The safety of the respondent's accommodation and relationships with family members were less affected due to COVID-19 than other spheres:

- a. Experienced positive changes in the safety of their accommodation (14,1 per cent) and family relationships (20,6 per cent).
- b. Experienced negative changes in the safety of their accommodation (27,2 per cent) and family relationships (23,9 per cent).

- c. Experienced no changes in the safety of their accommodation (57.6 per cent) and family relationships (47.8 per cent).

No significant differences in response were found between survivors from locations with more and less severe movement-restriction measures.

Overall, both male and female respondents believe that the COVID-19 pandemic has had a more significant negative impact on women survivors than on men (42.6 per cent), a third believed that the effect was similarly severe regardless of gender (35.1 per cent) (Figure3). A fifth of the remaining respondents could not answer this question (21.3 per cent). No statistically significant differences between answers of male and female respondents for this question was found.



## B. CHANGES IN ACCESS TO SERVICES AND CURRENT NEEDS FOR SERVICES

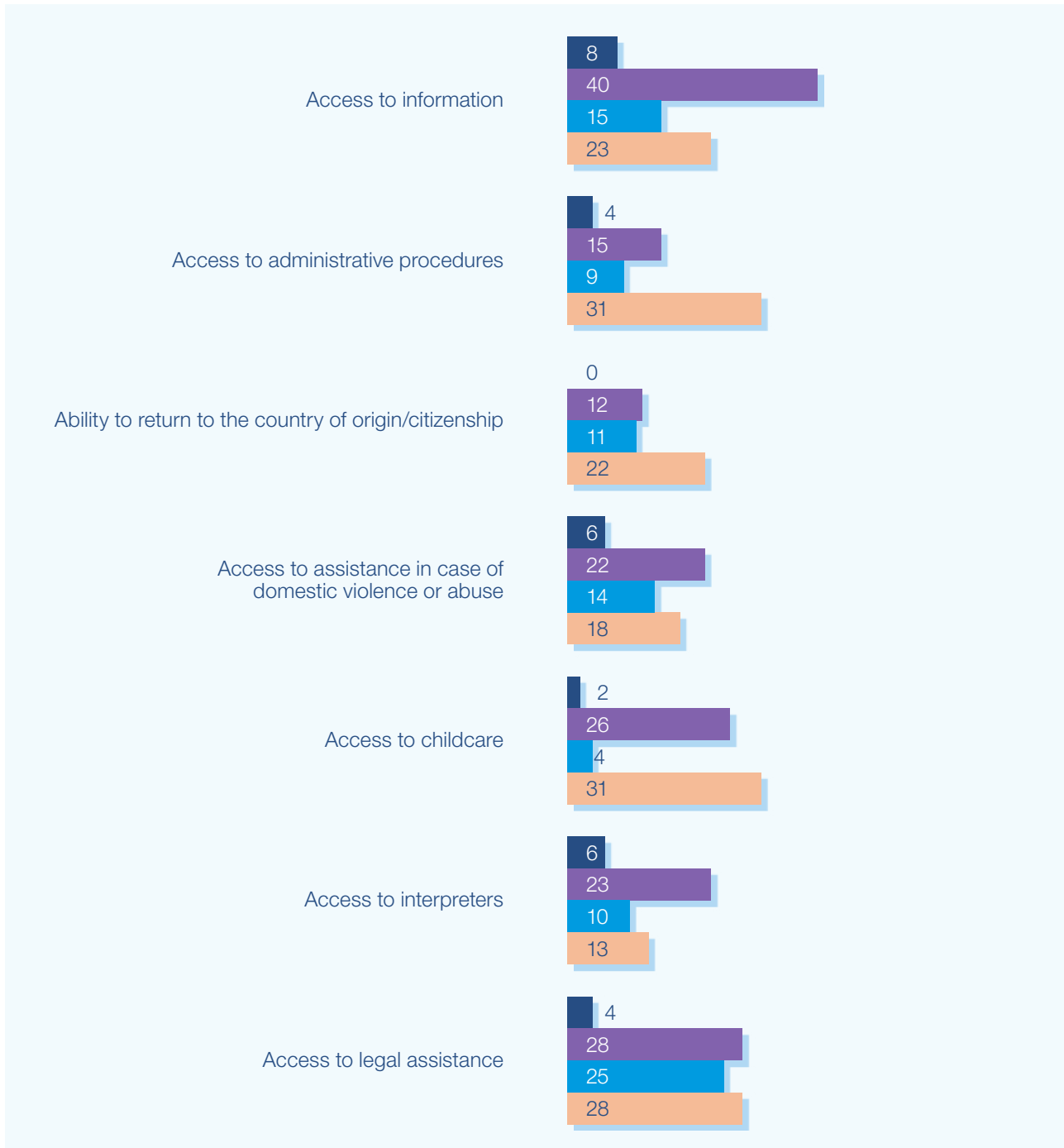
The survey measured self-reported changes in access to a range of services (Figure 4a). Compared to the situation before the pandemic, survivors faced difficulty in access to almost all services. The services reported by survivors as more difficult to access than before included access to medical services (67.7 per cent), assistance with obtaining employment (60.3 per cent),

access to psychological services (54.8 per cent) and legal assistance (52.7 per cent). Additionally, respondents reported negative changes to their pre-COVID-19 accommodation and basic needs: access to safe (35.5 per cent) and comfortable (26.9 per cent) accommodation and food and water (43 per cent). Sex-disaggregated data is presented in Figure 4b, however the differences in COVID-19-related changes in access to services between male and female survivors of trafficking were not statistically significant.

Survivors from non-OSCE countries more often reported that their access to food and water became much more difficult (40.0 per cent vs. 9.1 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

A small percentage (less than 10 per cent) of survivors reported better access to all services compared to the

situation prior to the pandemic, except for the ability to return to the country of origin – not a single respondent reported having better access to this measure. The only service that a somewhat significant proportion of survivors reported better access to was social services, with 17.2 per cent reporting better access during the pandemic.



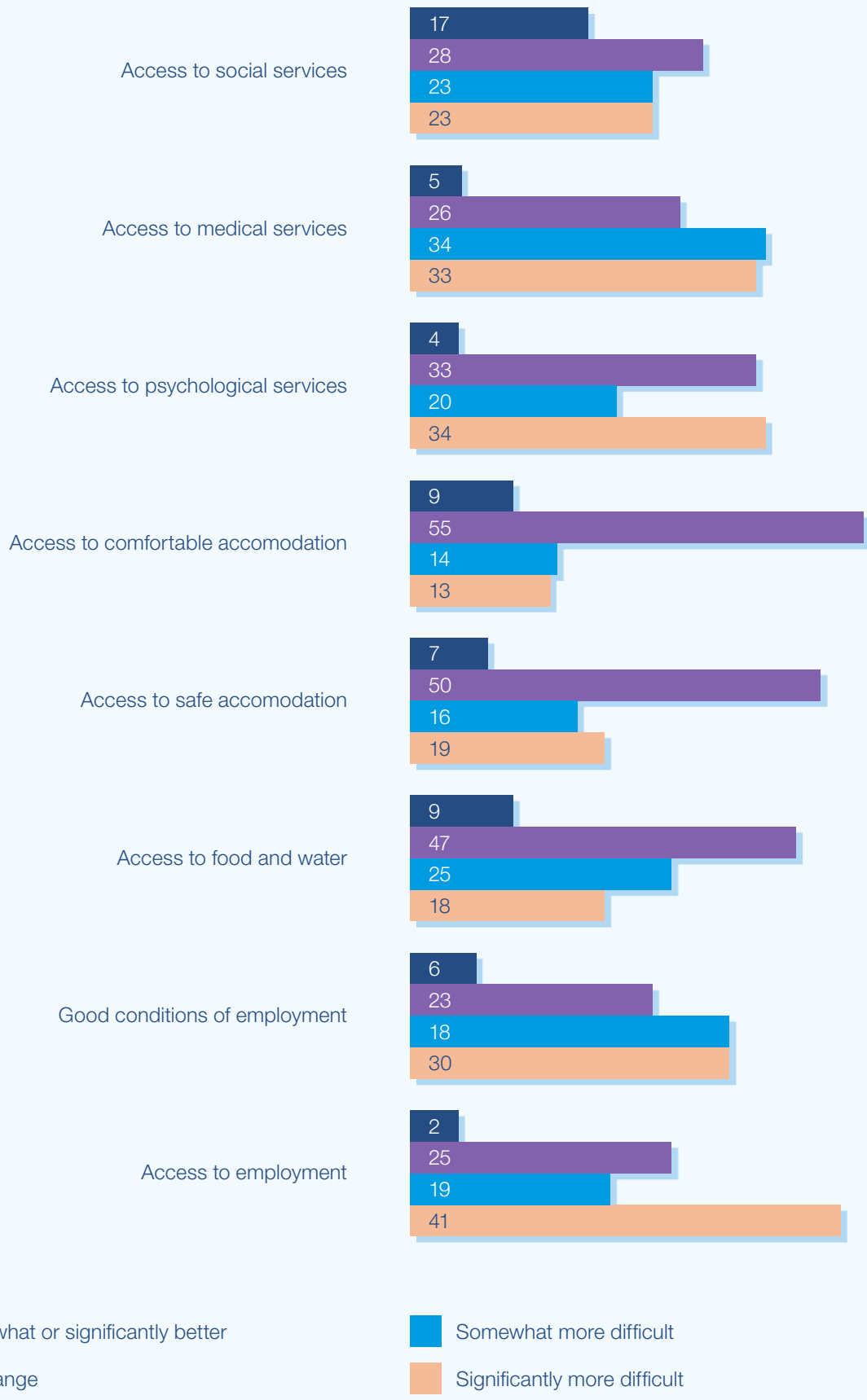
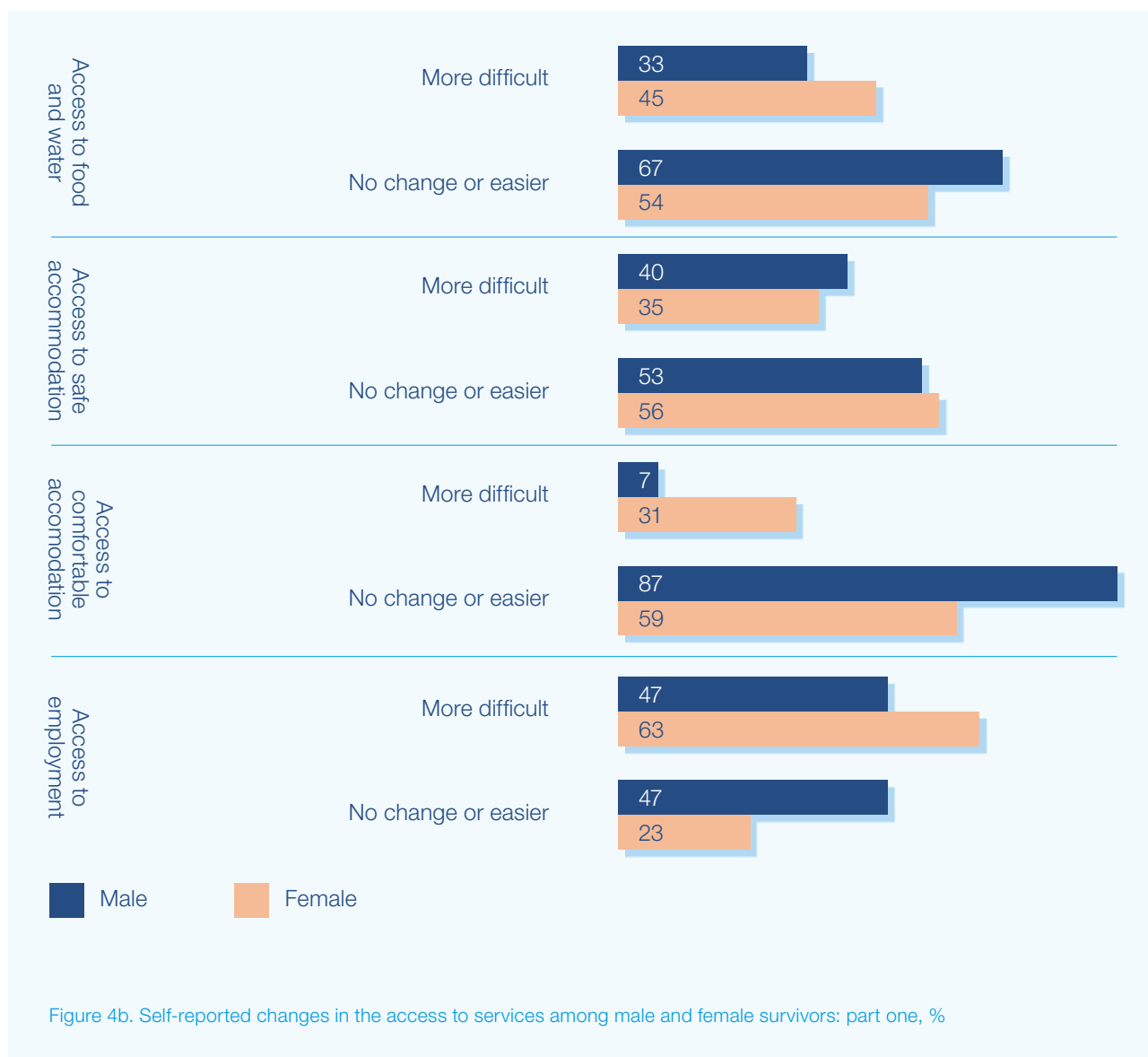


Figure 4a. Self-reported changes in the access to services, %

All survivors do not demand all services equally. A significant proportion of survivors could not report on the current situation regarding access to some services, because they did not know about and/or did not need them. Among them were services related to return to the country of origin/citizenship (54.9 per cent overall; 33.3 per cent of male respondents, 59.2 per cent of female respondents<sup>1</sup>), access to interpreters (47.9 per

cent overall; 33.3 per cent of male respondents, 50.7 per cent of female respondents<sup>2</sup>), administrative procedures (40.8 per cent overall; 33.3 per cent of male respondents, 42.3 per cent of female respondents<sup>3</sup>), access to assistance in case of domestic violence or other type of abuse (39.4 per cent; 33.3 per cent of male respondents, 40.5 per cent of female respondents<sup>4</sup>) and legal services (15.1 per cent; 13.3 per cent of male respondents, 15.4 per cent of female respondents<sup>5</sup>).



1 Differences are not statistically significant.

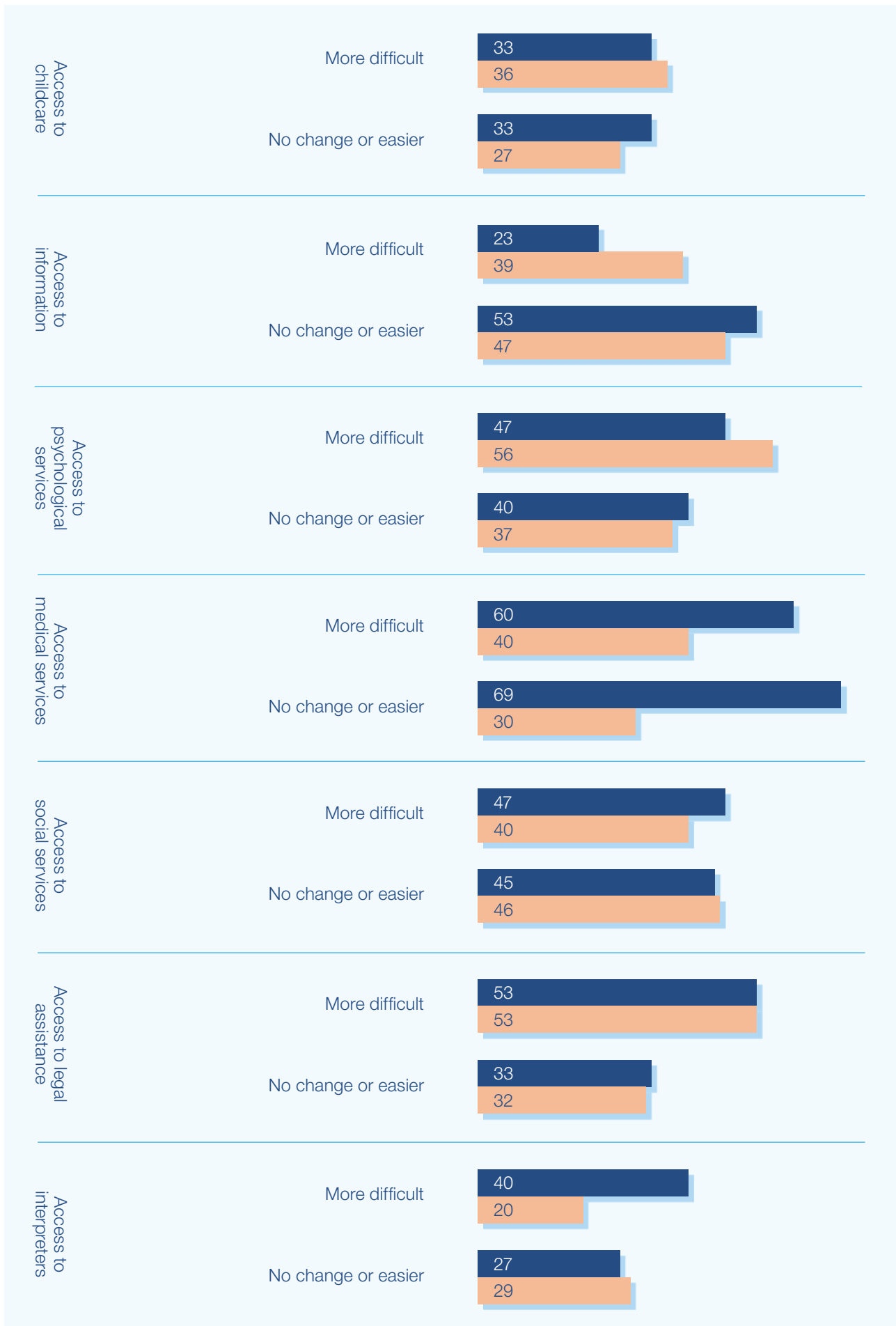
2 Differences are not statistically significant.

3 Differences are not statistically significant.

4 Differences are not statistically significant.

5 Differences are not statistically significant.





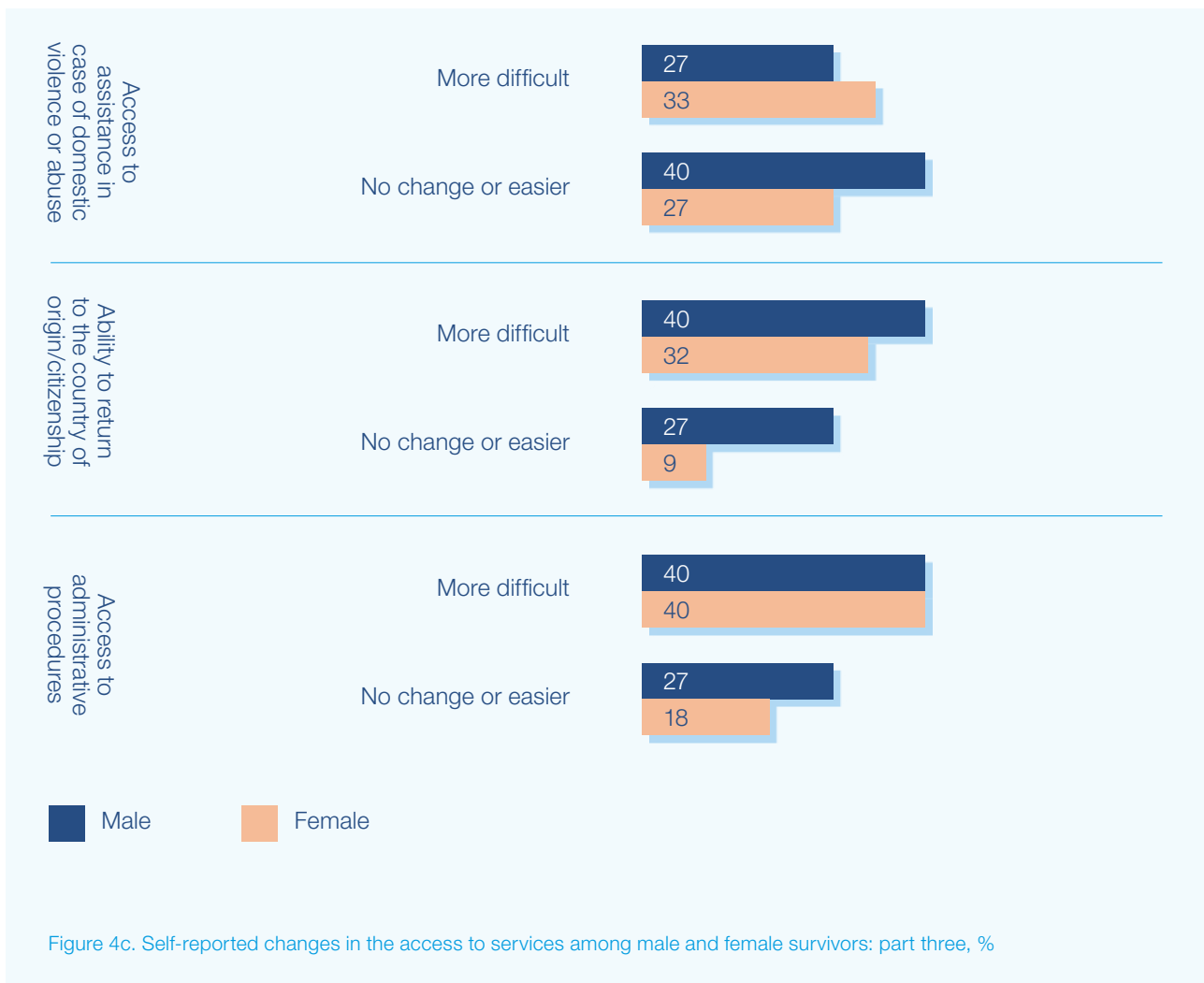


Figure 5 presents the services that the survivors currently need. All measured services are needed by a significant proportion of survivors. Services in higher demand are related to employment (59.3 per cent), psychological assistance (58.1 per cent), medical assistance (57.6 per cent), social services (51.1 per cent) and access to information (52.2 per cent).

Female respondents more often reported that they are currently in need for employment (57.1 per cent vs. 26.7 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ). No other statistically significant differences were found in the current need for services between male and female survivors of trafficking

Survivors located in countries with less restrictive movement measures – curfews, quarantines, and similar restrictions (known as stay-at-home orders, shelter-in-place orders, shutdowns/lockdowns) related to the COVID-19 pandemic – were more often in need of employment (64.3 per cent vs 42.0 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and

better employment conditions (73.8 per cent vs 46.9 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) as well as interpreters (38.1 per cent vs 17.6 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and assistance in cases of domestic violence (38.1 per cent vs 16.7 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Also, survivors from non-OSCE countries more often reported being in need of childcare (48.4 per cent vs. 22.6 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ), assistance for domestic violence or other types of abuse (48.4 per cent vs. 13.5 per cent;  $p \leq 0.001$ ) and ability to return to the country of origin (30.0 per cent vs. 9.4 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ).

Commenting on the situation, survivors also reported other needs and difficulties, which they are currently experiencing. One of the issues reported was a high level of violence and feeling of insecurity in their community, which may disrupt even basic needs (e.g., it is unsafe to go to work or shopping) and impact access to school education.

Respondents also reported receiving help from NGOs and noted their appreciation of provision of additional services.

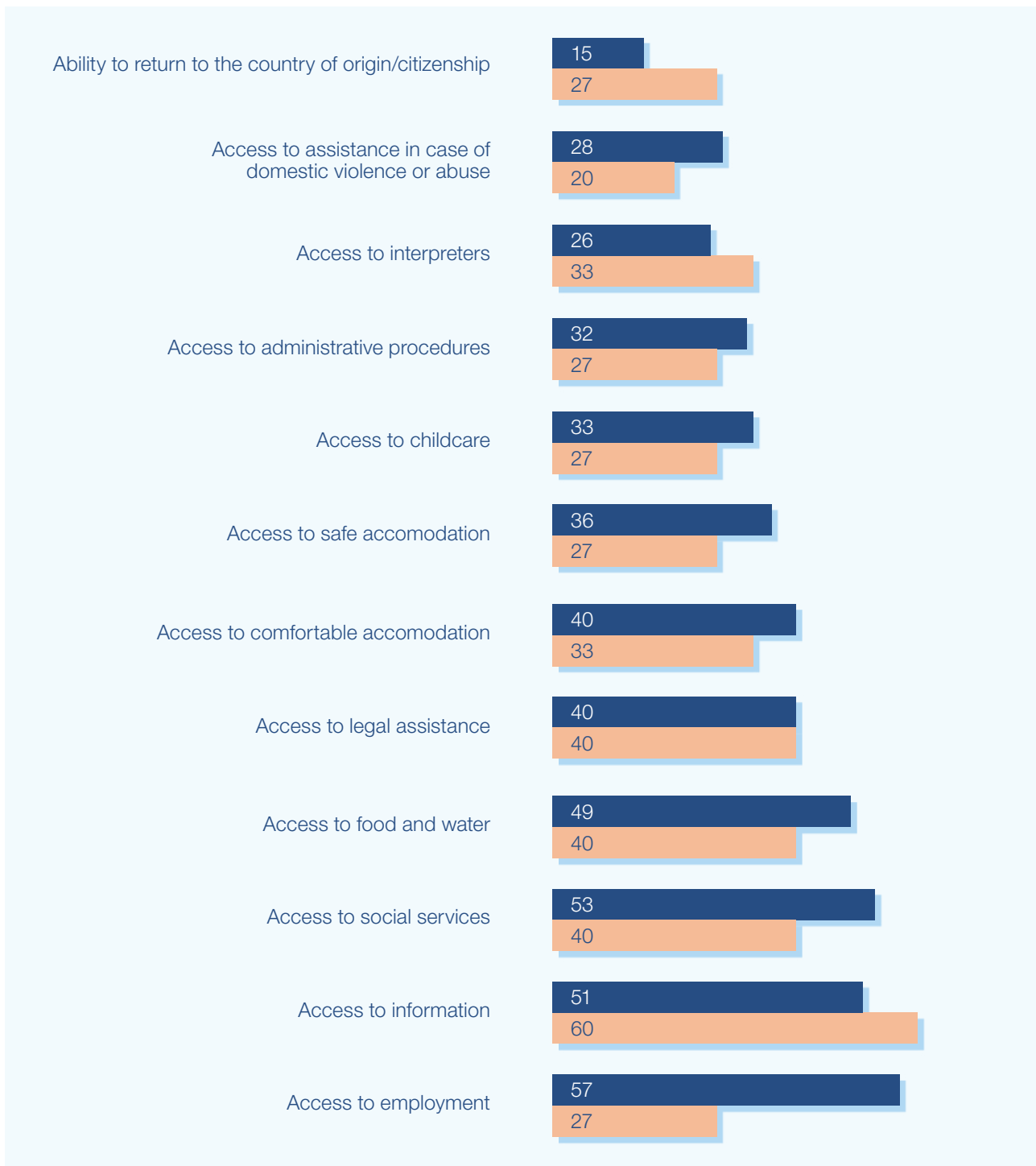
*“I appreciate the services that are offering texting and telephone counseling. It should continue to be offered post-Coronavirus.”* Female survivor from Canada

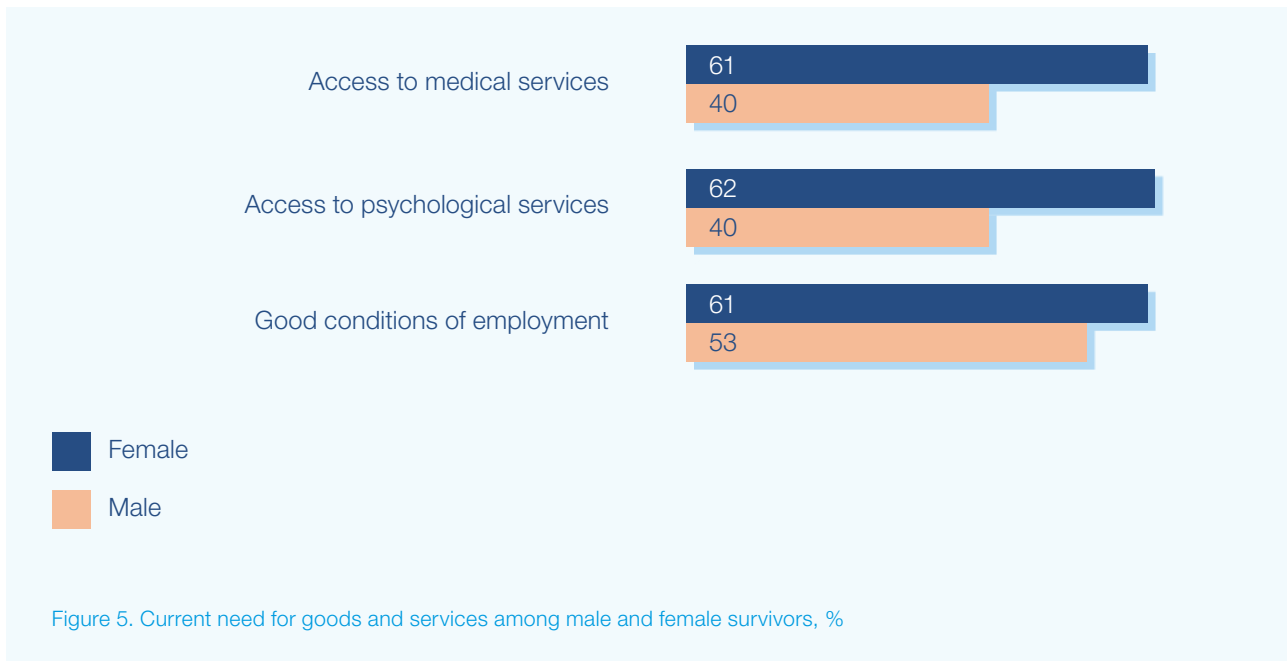
However, online services are underutilized by survivors due to financial constraints, including costs of access

to Internet and necessary communication technology (e.g., computers, smart phones).

*“Most of government online recourse takes Wi-Fi and I don’t have money to buy it.”* Female survivor from South Africa

Every fifth survivor (21.5 per cent) is now in the process of receiving statutory victim of trafficking status and is experiencing delays in this process. Respondents





indicated that administrative justice processes have delays or changes in procedures and that they are not receiving information about the status of their cases. Some respondents were: (1) uncomfortable calling for further information; (2) tried calling but could not get anyone to respond; or (3) were notified that no information would be available until the end of pandemic. For example, one respondent reported:

*“My criminal injuries hearing has finished, but they won’t mail out the results and compensation until after COVID is over.”* Female survivor from Canada

*“I arrived here in Ireland in January 2019 and since then police used to come and interrogate me until the last time, when they took all my original documents and I have not heard anything from them. I’m scared to call them and ask for my documents because the woman made me feel like I had committed a crime. She called me a liar and every time she came around, I was petrified.”* Female survivor from Ireland

*“Citizenship case delayed.”* Male survivor from Kazakhstan

Almost a third of survivors (31.5 per cent) experienced delays in legal procedures including in their administrative, criminal or civil cases. The respondents reported that these delays negatively affect their ability to access shelter, reunification with their children and financial compensation. Survivors from countries with more restrictive COVID-related lockdown measures more often reported facing these types of delays for cases regarding the statutory victim status (32.0 per cent) and for other cases (38.8 per cent).

### C. CHANGES IN THE HUMAN TRAFFICKING SITUATION

The majority of survivor respondents believe that the COVID-19 pandemic worsened the situation of current VoTs (66.7 per cent; overall; 60.0 per cent of male respondents and 67.9 per cent of female respondents<sup>6</sup>) or found it difficult to characterize the changes to VoTs (20.4 per cent overall; 13.3 per cent of male respondents and 21.8 per cent of female respondents<sup>7</sup>). In the mandatory choice questions, the majority of survivors answered that VoTs for the purpose of sexual exploitation (51.1 per cent) and VoTs for the purpose of labour exploitation (16.3 per cent) are the groups most negatively affected by the pandemic. It is important to note

6 The differences are not statistically significant.

7 The differences are not statistically significant.

that the majority of respondents were trafficked for sexual and labour exploitation and/or interact with such victims and this could influence the results. In addition, several respondents commented that it is impossible to choose the most affected group and all groups are negatively affected.

More than a quarter of respondents (25.8 per cent) observed a change in the recruitment and exploitation tactics by traffickers due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes in practices are mostly related to lockdown measures (restriction of movement) and an increase in poverty linked to the economic downturn. The most frequently mentioned changes include:

- a. An increase in the number of potential victims due to unemployment;
- b. Potential targeting of homeless people;
- c. An increase in the demand and supply of online pornography, including child pornography, inter alia through expanded tactics (e.g., exposure to pornography at online meetings) and a potential increase in the number of victims recruited for trafficking for purposes of pornography exploitation;
- d. An increase in the online modes of recruitment, including the expansion of the set of tactics from more traditional social media to, for example, video game chats; and
- e. Need to cover the cost of rent and facilities, as well as higher cost of food during the COVID-19 pandemic for traffickers, who in return transfer these expenses to victims, including the 'daily payment' they expect.

*"Currently the criminal trafficking networks are readapting and changing methods of capturing and exploiting the victims directly, we had already detected their operation through networks but now they have completely turned to this new context of physical risk of contact. Rents go up, where victims are housed and they are offered more hours of connectivity, less money, more expenses applied to technologies."* Female survivor from Argentina

From the beginning of the pandemic, every third survivor (34 per cent overall; 40.0 per cent of male survivors and 22.8 per cent of female survivors<sup>8</sup>) was targeted with at least one or several offers which were directly or potentially related to possible exploitation (Figure 6). The most common offers were employment in the same country (19.6 per cent), including offers from the sex industry (18.3 per cent) and employment without provision of information on the type of job or skills required for it (18.1 per cent). Somewhat less common were employment offers in another country (13.0 per cent) and for the purpose of illicit activities (12.9 per cent). In the majority of cases, these offers were made online, with the only exception for the sex industry (18.3 per cent) - half of these type of offers received were made offline (9.7 per cent).

---

8 The differences are not statistically significant.

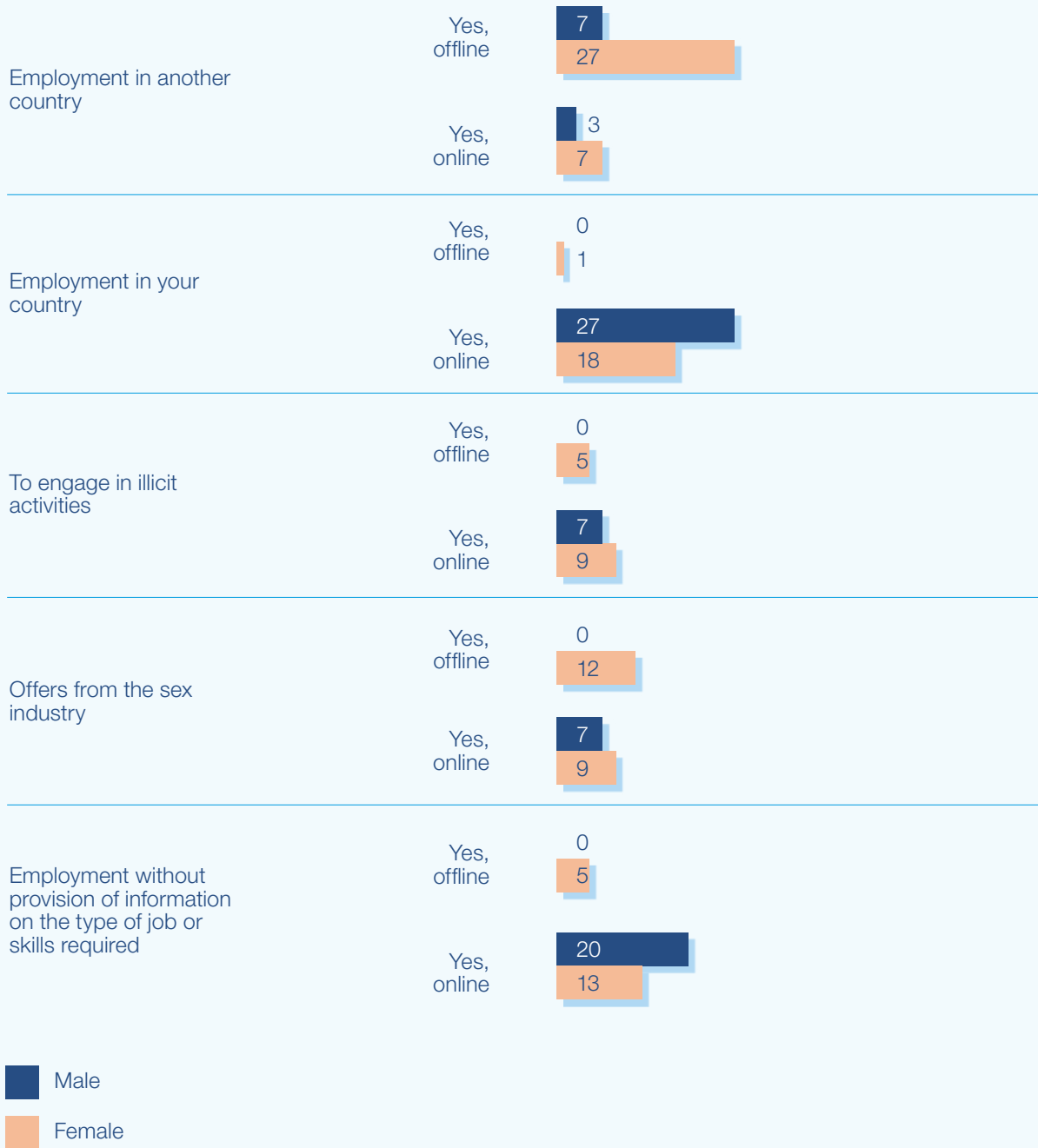


Figure 6. Male and female survivors being exposed with different types of offers during pandemic online and offline, %

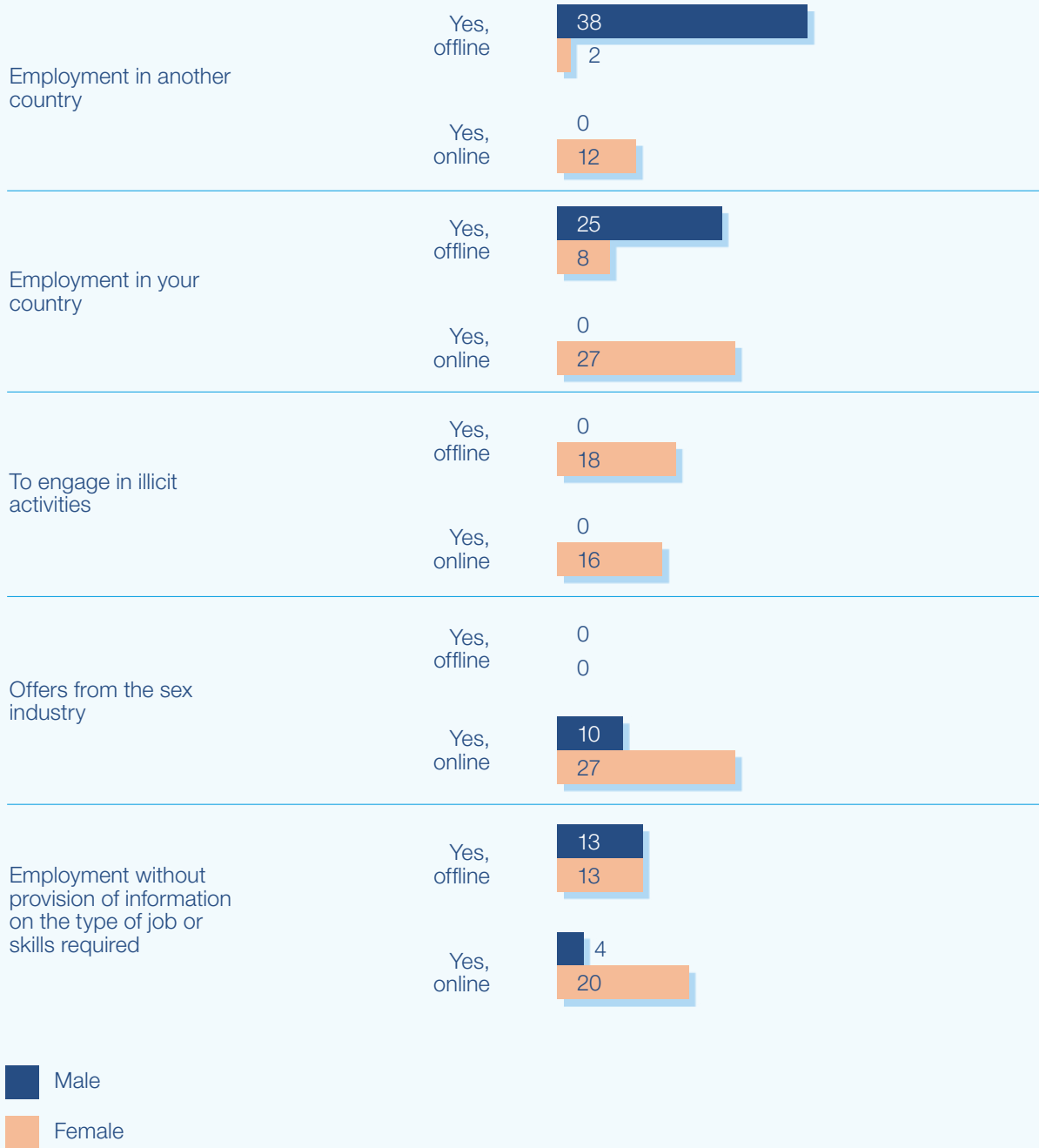


Figure 7. Male and female survivors who know other survivors or victims who were exposed to different types of offers during the pandemic, both online and offline, %

More than half of the respondents (54.3 per cent) suggest that survivors of trafficking face new or extra challenges and risks due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and respondents from OSCE participating States were more likely to name those (58.2 per cent vs. 43.3 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ). Those mentioned might be classified into several groups:

- a. High risk of vulnerability and re-victimization due to the financial downturn.

*“Due to my financial situation, I have been tempted to re-enter prostitution! ... This is the first time I’ve contemplated going back to the “industry” that damaged me immeasurably!”* Female survivor from the United Kingdom

- b. There is a loss of or decrease in access to services or, at a minimum, survivors are concerned about a loss of services due to the pandemic. Additional challenges resulting from lockdown measures (lack of options to travel and temporary closure of services for clients) and/or insufficient funding of NGOs providing services. Due to changes in modes of assistance available to survivors, they face additional barriers to access them:

*“...they are forced to be on hold for lengthy periods of time on the phone - which they can’t do if they are caring for children or working in any capacity.”* Female survivor from the United States

- c. One of the specific new challenges identified by many survey respondents from different countries is impact on mental health, including feelings of isolation. There is a high prevalence of previously diagnosed post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) in survivors of trafficking.<sup>1</sup> As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic and accompanying lockdown and social distancing measures, fear of illness or death, anonymity of people in masks, inability to freely leave their

accommodation or interact with people, experiences of domestic violence, high levels of uncertainty and perceived risks of losing their current lifestyle are becoming triggers for depression, anxiety and PTSD. Exposure to COVID-19 is also considered to be a particular risk for survivors, as well as all other community members.

*“This new form of confinement makes us anxious; we cannot breathe, it drowns us and the panorama of the apocalyptic and uncertain sharpens many of the pathologies that we have, post-rescue...”* Female survivor from Argentina

Half of respondents (50.5 per cent) believe that there are new challenges and risks for VoTs who are currently being exploited. In addition to the risks mentioned above, which are also relevant for this group, the additional risks include:

- d. New or more severe forms of exploitation of VoTs due to the financial downturn (likewise affecting the traffickers’ profit), further exacerbated by reduced law enforcement and civil society capacity. The respondents also mentioned the risks of increased violence towards sex trafficking victims from those who purchase sexual services, due to their overall stress and frustration.
- e. Respondents believe that those who are now being exploited may have a higher risk of exposure to COVID-19. This relates not only to those trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation, but also to victims of other forms of trafficking.

*“[Victims are] being forced to interact with others who may be infected, as traffickers find new ways to exploit victims.”* Female survivor from the United Kingdom

- f. Additional risks for victims of sexual exploitation may arise in countries where brothels operate legally but were closed due to the pandemic. In

---

10 Mazedra Hossain, Cathy Zimmerman, Melanie Abas, Miriam Light, and Charlotte Watts, “The Relationship of Trauma to Mental Disorders Among Trafficked and Sexually Exploited Girls and Women”, *American Journal of Public Health*; December 2010; 100(12): 2442–2449.



these cases, people continue to reside in brothels with a daily growth of debt for these living arrangements to the owners. For those traffickers who have moved their operations online, there is now a new risk that the identity of trafficking victims will be publicly revealed, the threat of use of these images will be used to further control them and that reintegration back to their communities will be impossible in some cases.

- g. Overall, many comments stated that the pandemic has shifted the focus of efforts away from combatting trafficking in human beings, which negatively affects all stages of work with victims, from identification to re-integration.

*"...we are not anyone's priority."* Female survivor from Argentina

*"Because of the curfew, the Ministry of Justice has put all the actions on hold and this caused delays in obtaining decisions for VOT cases to access shelter."* Female survivor from Iraq

Overall, respondents were not well aware of services available to VoTs or survivors of trafficking and changes/alternatives to these services during the COVID-19 pandemic: majority of respondents felt either uninformed about them (43.0 per cent) or slightly informed (16.1 per cent). Less than a third of survivors were fully (16.1 per cent) or mostly (12.9 per cent) informed. The major channels of receiving information for survivors were: official government or NGO websites (27.2 per cent) followed by online thematic groups (15.2 per cent) or personal contacts on social media sites (13.0 per cent). Chats and Internet searches were less frequently used (9.8 per cent and 6.5 per cent respectively). The other path for obtaining information about the availability of services for survivors was within their personal networks including: support groups, advocates, social workers they collaborate with and community services.

A range of different additional measures to assist victims of trafficking and survivors of trafficking were

proposed: 55.9 per cent of respondents (60.0 per cent of male respondents and 55.1 per cent of female respondents<sup>11</sup>) believe that some additional measures are needed to support the survivors of trafficking and 50.5 per cent of respondents see a need for measures to support VoTs (73.3 per cent of male respondents and 51.9 per cent of female respondents<sup>12</sup>).

The proposed more general measures were directed at both VoTs and survivors:

- h. Provision of financial support (e.g., financial grants and opportunities for employment) and help to cover food/basic living expenses, with particular emphasis on additional support for those with children;

*"Rising revenues, financial support from the state to cope with the difficulties even after the COVID-19 pandemic."* Female survivor from Albania

- i. Access to mental health assistance;

*"I don't have all the answers but survivors are suffering - Mental health is suffering - we are having flashbacks of being trapped, of nearly dying, suffocating, of not having food, etc. We need to know that we won't lose our homes, will have food and will not have to choose between life and income. Do I really have to die? Do I have to feel like I'm being suffocated every time I go out or have to stay in a tiny apartment. No one speaks to me..."* Female survivor from the United States

- j. Legal support and presence of advocates for VoTs and survivors from identification to reintegration; and

*"Having an advocate present at all the human trafficking victim's appointments really helps. There's still a lot of stigmas and the systems usually labels us instead of helping us. Advocates make sure we don't get neglected by the system after exiting human trafficking."* Female survivor from Canada

11 The differences are not statistically significant.

12 The differences are not statistically significant.

- k. Informational/awareness campaigns about trafficking in human beings, including where and how people can get help.

*“More advertising for where to call for help by way of public posters, radio, newspaper, TV, Internet ads. With a quick escape button. HT victims need long-term safe houses that can properly protect victims even if they don’t testify.”* Female survivor from Canada

A significant part of the services listed by respondents are not specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, but deemed necessary at any time. While some of these services are lacking or are underdeveloped in some countries, in other countries they may be limited or halted due to COVID-19 related lockdown measures or fund reallocation related to the pandemic.

The measures provided by respondents, which are specific to the COVID-19 pandemic, include:

- l. Monitoring the impact of COVID-19 and its related measures on the situation of survivors and VoTs;

*“Checking on them constantly and reassuring them that things will work out well.”* Female survivor from Ireland

- m. Ensuring that survivors have access to both Internet and phone to obtain assistance and services;

- n. Implementation of the existing services in an online format;

*“Organizations that provide services in the form of counseling, job training or other forms of education (including education on how to access services) should be offered virtually both by webinars and by recorded videos... Law enforcement should have a more active presence online.”* Male survivor from the United States

- o. Provision of staff and clients with personal protection equipment (PPE) and availability of COVID-19 testing in the shelters.

Additionally, a set of measures to assist VoTs were outlined by respondents:

- p. Provision of safehouses and shelters, including long-term accommodation. This service may need to be modified by implementing measures to prevent transmission of COVID-19 to residents of these accommodations or incoming VoTs;

*“Better knowledge of escape plans for women, they feel they have nowhere to go, shelters are full of COVID-19. Apartments won’t rent, girls can’t access social workers or social services to escape.”* Female survivor from Canada

- q. Work on addressing demand for trafficking in human beings, especially in context of sexual exploitation;

*“Increase arrests and convictions of pimps, traffickers and most of all, THE BUYERS. Stop Demand.”* Female survivor from the United States

- r. Early detection and prevention of cases of trafficking in human beings, including online; and

- s. Interventions focused on long-term exit strategies for victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, those in situations of sexual exploitation and those wanting to leave the sex industry, especially as red-light districts and brothels are closed during COVID-19 lockdown measures.

*“Yes, frontline services should get in touch with those affected and make exit offers. Hotels affected by the closure due to Corona could be rented cheaply by responsible authorities in the cities and made available to victims of human trafficking during the Corona pandemic.”* Female survivor from Germany

*“Increase in exiting services, this is a good time to help women who are worried about contracting the virus to leave the life.”* Female survivor from Canada

The only additional service proposed only for survivors of trafficking was:

- t. Development of survivor leader networks and mentorship support.

## D. POST-PANDEMIC: FUTURE NEEDS

The respondents were asked to choose up to three priority services that would reflect the most urgent needs of survivors of trafficking (Figure 9) and VoTs (Figure 8). Overall, the most needed services were the same for survivors and VoTs. The most commonly mentioned were psychological services (39.4 per cent for survivors and 42.6 per cent for VoTs respectively), financial assistance (37.2 per cent for survivors and 43.6 per cent for VoTs respectively), medical services (30.9 per cent for survivors and 37.2 per cent for VoTs respectively) and shelter accommodation (33.0 per cent for survivors and 44.7 per cent for VoTs respectively). Other services such as education/employment training, legal services and social services were named as important by more than 25 per cent of survivors. Overall, the presented list of services could be perceived as mostly complete, since only one to three per cent of respondents chose to describe needs which were not listed in the question.

Among post-COVID-19 priorities for services focused on traffic victims, females more often chose financial assistance (48.1 per cent vs. 20.0 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ), while male survivors prioritized such services as legal (46.7 per cent vs. 13.9 per cent;  $p \leq 0.01$ ); medical (66.7 per cent vs. 31.6 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and regularization of migration status/ temporary residence permit (38.5 per cent vs. 12.2 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ). The second priority area for women respondents was psychological services (Figure 8). A similar pattern emerged on the responses to post-COVID-19 pandemic services for survivors: female respondents prioritized financial assistance (41.8 per cent vs. 13.3 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ), while male medical services (60.0 per cent vs. 25.3 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) (Figure 9).

Survivors from non-OSCE countries more often mentioned referral into the NRM as the most important need for both VoTs (22.6 per cent vs. 3.6 per cent;  $p \leq 0.01$ ) and survivors (16.1 per cent vs. 1.8 per cent;  $p \leq 0.01$ ). Survivors from the OSCE region more often selected regularization of residence status for survivors (18.2 per cent vs. 3.2 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) and psychological service for VoTs (52.7 per cent vs. 25.8 per cent;  $p \leq 0.05$ ) as the most urgent needs.

Respondents also extensively described other measures that governments should implement to better address demand for trafficking in human beings after the COVID-19 pandemic. The measures and proposals described below

were provided by some respondents and do not necessarily reflect the views of all survivors of trafficking.

### 1. LEGAL AND PROCEDURAL CHANGES

Respondents provided a number of comments relating to legal or procedural changes needed to more effectively address trafficking in human beings. Those measures may include:

- a. Effective implementation of international protocols (for example, Palermo Protocol, CEDAW, etc.);

*“Implement CEDAW Article 6, all governments adhere to the Declaration of Human Rights.” Female survivor from the United States*

- b. Increasing sentences for involvement in trafficking crime (including possible registration as sex offenders);

*“The men that get a lot of money to traffic people must be locked up forever.” Female survivor from South Africa*

*“Longer prison sentences for traffickers and registration as sex offenders upon release.” Female survivor from the United States*

- c. Increasing sentences for involvement in sexual exploitation of children, including production of child pornography;

*“Ongoing investigations targeting the pedophiles who buy and sell children during early childhood years. Ongoing pursuit of traffickers who create pornography of children.” Female survivor from the United States*

- d. Criminalization and/or providing more severe penalties/legal punishment for people who use illegal labor services; and

*“Criminalize those who contract services where there is no transparent system of labor contracting.” Female survivor from Argentina*

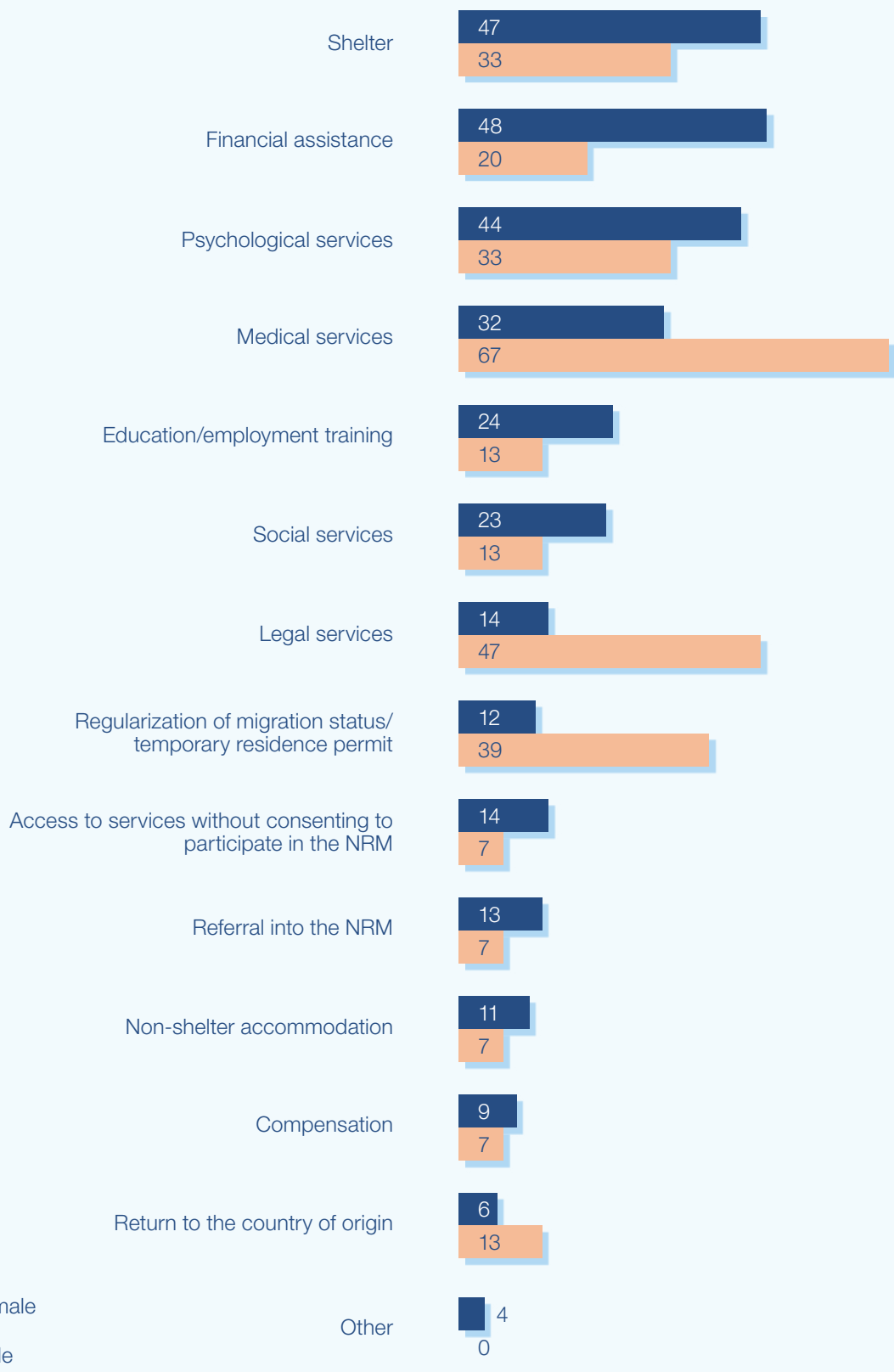
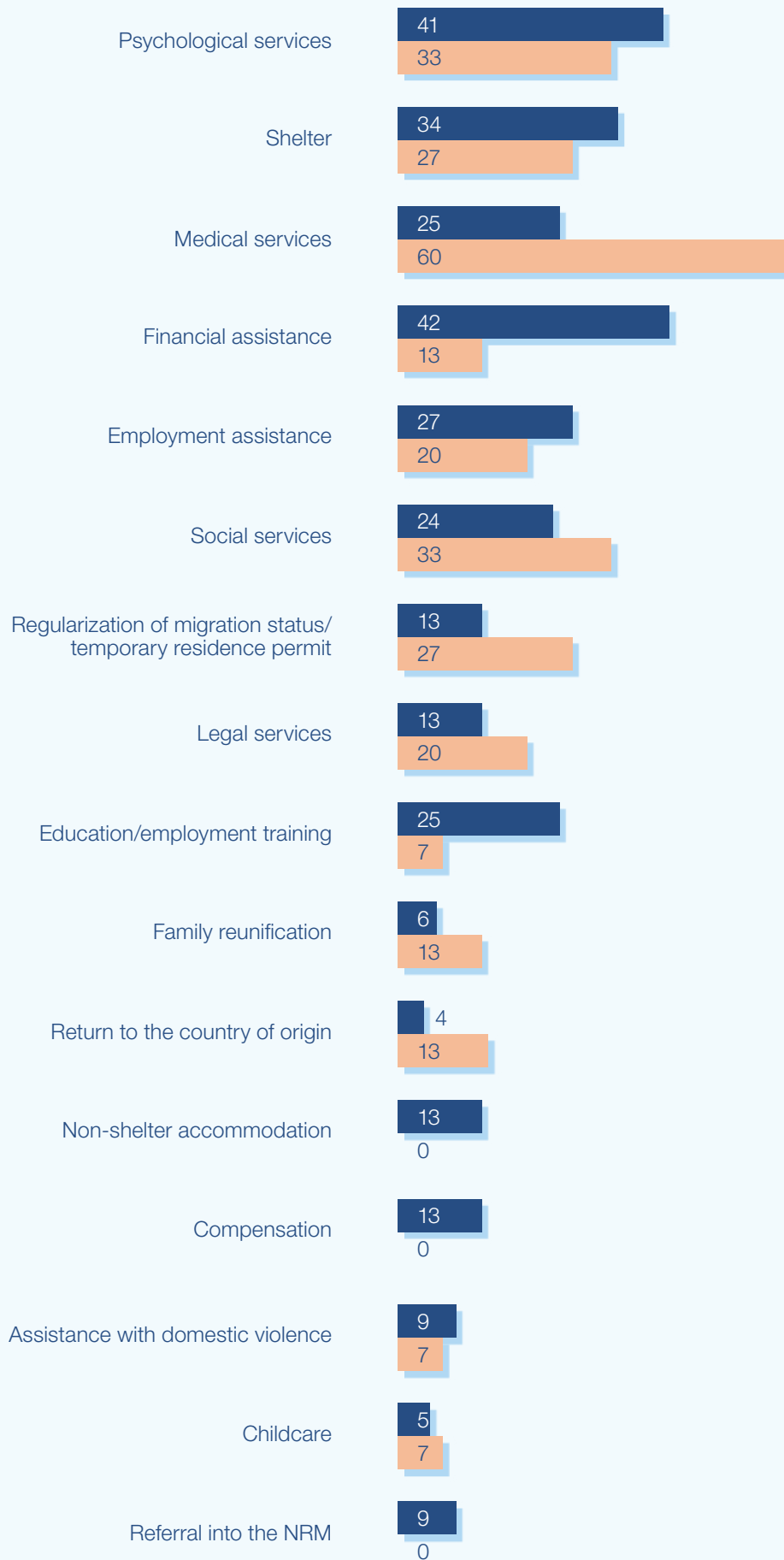


Figure 8. The most important needs of VoTs identified by male and female respondents, %<sup>13</sup>

13 The answer options “childcare”, “family reunification” and “assistance in the case of domestic violence” have not been presented among the needs list for VoTs.



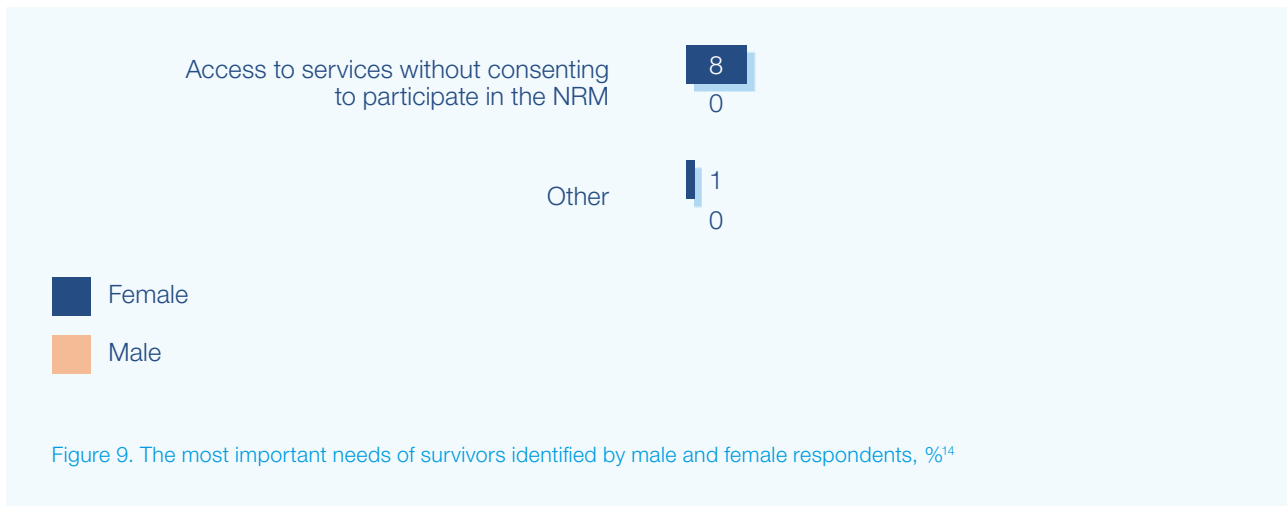


Figure 9. The most important needs of survivors identified by male and female respondents, %<sup>14</sup>

- e. Address demand, which fuels THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

*"...increased penalties for buyers of sexual services, decriminalization of those engaged in selling of sexual services." Male survivor from the United States*

*"Hold sex buyers accountable. Adopt the Nordic model and arrest/charge the men who are driving the demand." Female survivor from Canada*

*"Higher penalties for 'Johns' including fines, impounding cars, and publicly posting names and mug shots." Female survivor from the United States*

The other set of measures include changes in the procedures the VoTs are facing. Those include:

- f. Decreasing the time it takes to make decisions about asylum applications; and

*"You stay in these hostels for years without any answers to your application for asylum. By the time you are granted permission to stay you have already given up on life, you don't have a will to live anymore you're just tired." Female survivor from Iceland*

- g. Opportunities for VoTs to get comprehensive help without a requirement to testify against their traffickers.

*"Don't force people to testify in order to access safety. HT victims should automatically be believed and protected... with or without a written statement. Make the victims lives easier after exiting, not harder." Female survivor from Canada*

## 2. CHANGE OF PUBLIC OPINION AND SOCIAL NORMS

Together with legal changes, changes in the public awareness and social norms should also be a part of the anti-trafficking strategy. Survivors believe that public awareness campaigns or other measures need to be implemented in order to achieve:

- a. Unacceptability of trafficking in human beings;
- b. Unacceptability of sexual exploitation in any form;
- c. Compassion and de-stigmatization of VoTs and survivors and their social inclusion in communities;

14 The answer options "childcare", "family reunification" and "assistance in the case of domestic violence" have not been presented among the needs list for VoTs.

*“There is a person being exploited. Someone who did not want to be used, bought or sold. Someone who just needed food, rent, someone who just didn’t have anyone else to turn to or another choice and until we see that person as our friend, neighbor, sister, daughter, etc., it will never stop.” Female survivor from the United States*

- d. Public understanding of laws regarding trafficking in human beings, and how to identify and assist victims of trafficking; and

*“So many people have been trafficked without their knowledge. It takes a keen eye to see these acts. I think the general public should be educated on how to spot and assist these victims.” Female survivor from Ireland*

- e. Public awareness of the magnitude of the problem and its relevance to the particular country.

*“Tell about the problem of trafficking, because I don’t see anything about it on TV or somewhere else. It’s like this problem is nonexistent, everybody seems to think that any kind of trafficking is only in other countries like Russia or America.” Female survivor from Greece*

### **3. CONTINUATION AND EXTENSION OF SOCIAL SERVICES**

Survivors referred to a long list of services for VoTs and survivors of trafficking they considered important, including shelters provision, financial assistance, help with exit strategies, education and training, as well as psychological services. Among important features of these services, survivors mentioned: the need for services to be long-term, from identification to reintegration/return to the country of origin; and ensuring that the support, assistance and protection provided are monitored and evaluated and are based on a victim-centered, gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach.

*“Assist more women, girls and adolescents. Give them financial support, professional and intellectual training, also follow-up, so that all those measures are fulfilled. And that it is not only a number for statistics, but that the achievements of these women are demonstrated*

*with facts, since everything is important and necessary. Give us necessary tools so that we not only go out to work, but also, we can reason and discern what is best for us.” Female survivor from Uruguay*

*“Respect victims, provide legal assistance, as well as, training and safe placement of workers.” Female survivor from Indonesia*

Survivors also repeatedly mentioned the need for increased and sustainable funding for frontline service providers, especially those which are survivor-led, working on a local level, and are relatively small organizations.

*“And please can you look at funding survivor-led exit programmes for women and girls involved in or at-risk for prostitution.” Female survivor from the United Kingdom*

*“Fund local anti-trafficking groups. Stop putting all the money into the management/CEOs and put it on the streets where it is needed. How dare governments rip funding for women during this time.” Female survivor from Canada*

### **4. COLLABORATION**

Respondents of the survey also addressed the need for improvement in collaboration efforts to combat trafficking in human beings. They mentioned the need for more extensive collaboration and involvement in the anti-trafficking activities by stakeholders such as:

- a. Women's organizations;
- b. Organizations working with people vulnerable to THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation; and
- c. Human rights organizations.

*“The organizations that work with ladies on the street/prostitutes should hand out information about anti-human trafficking.” Female survivor from South Africa*

They also discussed the need for governmental bodies to be more involved in this topic and proposed some concrete actions in this regard, for example:

- d. Ensuring monitoring and supervision of workers from other countries and recruitment agencies working with them; and
- e. Co-ordinating provision of services for returning migrants.

*“Government should proactively co-ordinate and collaborate with the UN, IOs, and local NGOs to provide services for return of migrants (both regular or irregular). And also, safe migration and human trafficking awareness should be facilitated at the community level especially in high risk of migration and border area. Besides, that Departments of Labour should closely co-ordinate with recruitment agencies to be official recruitment and not to violate the CoC. And also, Departments of Immigration should strengthen the border control system.” Female survivor from Myanmar*

*“Monitoring the involvement of workers from other countries, forced registration of workers in the structures of the Ministry of Internal Affairs.” Male survivor from Ukraine*

## **5. LARGE SOCIETAL CHANGES**

Eradication of poverty, access to education and equality were named as the goals that could help to achieve a decrease in the number of VoTs and the crime of trafficking in human beings overall.

*“Job creation.” Female survivor from Cameroon*

*“...increased education, increased efforts to achieve equality and eradication of poverty.” Male survivor from the United States*



## SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

As the survey findings demonstrate, the COVID-19 pandemic has had significant negative impacts on the situation and well-being of survivors of trafficking. However, this negative impact was only partially due to new needs and challenges due to the COVID-19 pandemic and the implementation of various response measures. The COVID-19 pandemic exacerbated and exposed the already existing gaps in national anti-trafficking frameworks overall and particularly in NRMs and equivalent systems. Due to measure put in place in response to the COVID-19 pandemic this survey of survivors found:

- a. Survivors of trafficking reported lack of access to basic needs, including access to food and water, safe and comfortable accommodation and lack of access to testing for COVID-19 (Figure 5).
- b. The specific spheres of life of survivors most negatively affected are psychological and financial well-being. A majority of survivors reported negative changes in those areas (Figure 2). Survivors reported a decline in financial well-being due to the lack of job opportunities and unemployment, and the overall economic downturn. Psychological wellbeing, likewise, declined due to a high level of uncertainty, isolation due to restriction of movement, and retriggering of PTSD.
- c. Compared to the situation before the pandemic, survivors were faced with more difficult access to almost all services and goods (Figure 4). The services that were most often reported by survivors as being more difficult to access include medical services, employment opportunities, access to psychological services and legal assistance.
- d. Survivors prioritized access to services: assistance with employment, psychological medical and social services, as well as access to information (Figure 5) to VoTs and survivors. Overall, survivors were poorly informed about changes in service provision during the pandemic. About half of survivors experienced delays in receiving statutory status of VoT or in other types of legal procedures. These delays negatively affected survivors' ability to access shelter accommodation, reunification with their children and financial compensation.
- e. Survivors globally experienced similar challenges. However, respondents from outside the OSCE region reported the need for a larger number of services and repeatedly prioritized access to NRMs as the important measure after the pandemic. At the same time, survivors from the OSCE region highlighted access to psychological services and timely provision of statutory status of VoT as priorities after the pandemic.
- f. More than half of survivors believe that the pandemic has exacerbated the vulnerability of at-risk groups to human trafficking crime. The economic downturn will increase the vulnerability to recruitment by traffickers and the risk of re-victimization of survivors. These factors are further negatively impacted by reprioritization of human and financial resources by government institutions to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.
- g. Online forms of recruitment by traffickers has become more prevalent during the pandemic (Figures 6, 7). Survivors still continue to be targeted by traffickers mostly online.
- h. VoTs who are currently in situations of exploitation may also be facing new or more severe forms of exploitation due to the financial downturn, which has affected the traffickers' ability to generate profits. VoTs are also at a higher risk of contracting COVID-19 due to their trafficking situation.
- i. Survivors prioritized access to psychological services, financial assistance, medical services and shelter accommodation. However, to

effectively combat trafficking in human beings, a comprehensive set of measures should be implemented, including:

- i. Legal and procedural changes focused on increasing sentencing for traffickers and addressing demand in the sex industry that fuels THB for the purpose of sexual exploitation;
  - ii. Changes in public opinion and social norms through awareness campaigns about trafficking in human beings and de-stigmatization of VoTs and survivors;
  - iii. The need for services to be long-term, from identification to reintegration/return to the country of origin, and ensuring that the support, assistance and protection provided are monitored and evaluated and are based on a victim-centered, gender-sensitive and human rights-based approach as well as strengthened interagency co-operation; and
  - iv. Eradication of poverty, access to education and equality would help to achieve the decrease the number of VoTs and the crime of trafficking in human beings overall.
- j. Even though the male sample size of respondents was significantly smaller than that of women, the data show that women and men survivors and VoTs have different needs and priorities in terms of getting services both during and after COVID-19 pandemic. Female respondents prioritized financial assistance, while male respondents focused on medical and legal services. Both men and women respondents believe that the COVID-19 pandemic has a more significant negative impact on women survivors and VoTs in comparison to their male counterparts.

# APPENDIX – SURVEY QUESTIONS

## SURVEY ON CONSEQUENCES TO VICTIMS AND SURVIVORS DUE TO COVID 19 OUTBREAK

### Opening:

We would like to learn more about the impact of the COVID 19 pandemic on survivors and victims of trafficking. We acknowledge that many of you are currently in very difficult situations and we highly appreciate your time and effort in completing this survey. The survey data will be utilized to draft policy recommendations to governments, UN, civil society and other relevant stakeholders to address immediate and mid-term consequences of COVID 19 on victims and survivors of trafficking. The survey will take approximately 20-30 minutes and all of your responses will remain confidential.

If at any point during the survey you prefer to stop answering, please feel free to do so. Your data will not be shared with anyone and you will not be able to be identified or associated with any of your answers. If you need to access support or speak to someone in your country about your current situation a list of resources available to you are included in the side of the page

### I. CURRENT STATE OF WELLBEING INCLUDING COVID 19 STATUS

#### What is your gender?

- Female
- Male
- Prefer to self-describe (text box)

---

Prefer not to say

#### In the location you are currently, which of the following better describes your situation:

- Leaving your accommodation is allowed only in an emergency situation
- Leaving your accommodation is allowed only for basic necessities such as purchase of food and medicine and
- Medical assistance
- It's recommended for people to stay at home but it is not enforced
- There are no significant limitations to movement or travel
- Other

#### In the location you are currently in, public services (such as post offices, schools, health care, social services) are:

- Mostly closed
  - Partially closed
  - Available online only
  - Fully operational
  - Other
-

**Did you personally experienced the following:**

	Yes	No
Being in contact with someone who has COVID 19		
Symptoms of COVID 19		
Being tested for COVID 19		
Being diagnosed with COVID 19		
Being treated at home due to COVID 19		
Being treated at hospital due to COVID 19		
Taking care of someone who has COVID 19		

**Overall, how does the current COVID 19 pandemic affect the following areas of your life?**

	Signifi- cantly better	Some- what better	No change	Some- what worse	Signif- icantly worse	Don't know/ Does not apply
Your health						
Your psychological state						
Your financial well-being						
Your safety in your accommodation						
Your relationships with your immediate family						
Other (please explain: ) _____ _____						

## II. CHANGES IN ACCESS TO SERVICES

In comparison to the situation prior to COVID 19 epidemic, how much more difficult or easier is it for you to access the following:

	Signifi- cantly easier	Some- what easier	No change	Some- what more difficult	Signif- icantly more difficult	Don't know/ Does not apply
Access to Employment (steady employment, job security, access to the job market)						
Good conditions of employment (for example, safety or work schedule)						
Access to Food and Water						
Access to a safe accommodation (for example, shelter)						
Comfortable accommodation (for example, in terms of size, number of residents, etc.)						
Access to psychological services (for example, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.)						
Access to medical services (for example, primary doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, COVID 19 testing)						
Access to social services (for example, case manager, social worker, NGO, etc.)						
Access to legal assistance (for example, lawyer)						
Access to interpreters (for example, when needed for services, interactions with law enforcement or lawyers)						
Access to childcare						
Access to assistance for domestic violence or any other form of abuse (for example, response from law enforcement, hotlines, NGOs, availability of shelter, etc.)						
Ability to return to the country of origin/citizenship						

Access to administrative procedures  
(processing of asylum claims, temporary residence permit process, permanent residence permit process, work permit process, regularization of stay during COVID 19, etc.)

Access to information  
(for example, about needed services)

Anything additional not mentioned above:

---

### III. CURRENT NEED AND ACCESS TO SERVICES

#### Do you currently need the following services?

	Yes	No
Access to Employment (steady employment, job security, access to the job market)		
Good conditions of employment (for example, in terms of safety, protective materials from the COVID pandemic or work schedule)		
Access to Food and Water		
Access to a safe accommodation (for example, shelter)		
Conditions of accommodation (for example, size, number of residents, etc.)		
Access to psychological services (for example, psychologist, psychiatrist, etc.)		
Access to medical services (for example, primary doctors, hospitals, pharmacies, COVID 19 testing)		
Access to social services (for example, case manager, social worker, NGO, etc.)		
Access to legal assistance (for example, lawyer)		
Access to interpreters (for example, when needed for services, interactions with law enforcement or lawyers)		
Access to childcare		
Access to assistance for domestic violence or any other form of abuse (for example, response from law enforcement, hotlines, NGOs, availability of shelter, etc.)		
Ability to return to the country of origin/citizenship		

Access to administrative procedures (processing of asylum claims, temporary residence permit process, permanent residence permit process, work permit process, regularization of stay during COVID 19, etc.)

Access to information (for example, about needed services)

Anything additional not mentioned above:

---

#### IV. ACCESS TO JUSTICE

**Are you experiencing delays in decisions regarding your statutory victim of trafficking status?**

- Yes (If yes, please explain further below: )       Does not apply  
 No       Prefer not to say

**Are you experiencing changes in procedure, delays or postponements in your administrative, criminal or civil cases?**

- Yes (If yes, please explain further below.)       Does not apply  
 No       Prefer not to say

#### V. SITUATION AMONG RISK GROUPS

**In your view, the COVID 19 pandemic:**

- Improved the situation of victims of trafficking  
 Worsened the situation of victims of trafficking  
 Had no impact on the situation of victims of trafficking  
 I don't know

**In your view, COVID 19 pandemic has more significant impact on:**

- Victims of trafficking for purpose of sexual exploitation  
 Victims of trafficking for purpose of labour exploitation  
 Victims of trafficking for purpose of criminal activities  
 Victims of trafficking for purpose of forced marriage  
 Victims of trafficking for purpose of organ removal  
 Victims of trafficking for purpose not listed above (Please explain.)

---

I don't know

**Are you aware of any changes to recruitment tactics by traffickers due to the COVID 19 pandemic?**

- Yes (If yes, please explain further below.)       No

**From the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, have someone contacted YOU with the following offer (please select all applicable answers):**

	Yes, online	Yes, offline	No
Employment in another country			
Employment in your country			
To engage in illicit activities			
Offers from the sex industry, including offering such services virtually (online)			
Employment without provision of information on the type of job or skills required for it			
Other (please explain) _____			

**Do you have a child or children, whom you are currently taking care of (under 18 years of age)**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say

**From the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, has anyone contacted YOUR CHILD for the following reasons (please select all applicable answers):**

	Yes, online	Yes, offline	No
With an offer of employment			
Soliciting their images			
Other (please explain) _____			

**From the start of COVID 19 pandemic were you in any form of communication with a victim or survivor of trafficking**

- Yes
- No
- Prefer not to say



**From the start of the COVID 19 pandemic, has a victim or survivor of trafficking you know encountered any of the following (please select all applicable answers):**

	Yes, online	Yes, offline	No	I don't know
Employment in another country				
Employment in the same country				
Offers from the sex industry, including offering such services virtually (online)				
Employment without provision of information on the type of job or skills required for it				
Other (please explain) _____				

## VI. PERCEIVED CURRENT SITUATION OF SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING

**In your view, are there additional and/or new challenges/risks encountered by survivors of trafficking due to the COVID 19 pandemic?**

Yes (Please explain)

\_\_\_\_\_

No

I don't know

**In your view, are there additional measures, which should be implemented due to the COVID 19 pandemic to support survivors of trafficking?**

Yes (Please explain)

\_\_\_\_\_

No

I don't know

## VII. PERCEIVED CURRENT SITUATION OF VICTIMS OF TRAFFICKING

**In your view, are there additional and/or new challenges/risks encountered by victims of trafficking due to the COVID 19 pandemic, who are currently in situations of trafficking for various forms of exploitation?**

Yes (Please explain)

\_\_\_\_\_

No

I don't know

**In your view, are there additional measures, which should be implemented due to the COVID 19 pandemic to identify, protect and assist victims of trafficking, who are currently in situations of trafficking for various forms of exploitation?**

Yes (Please explain)

---

No

I don't know

## **VIII. GENDER**

**In your view, the COVID-19 pandemic and the measures implemented as a result had more significant impact on victims/survivors of trafficking:**

More women and girls than men and boys

Equally women and girls and men and boys

More men and boys than women and girls

I don't know

## **IX. ACCESS TO INFORMATION**

**Have you been informed on the services available to victims/survivors of trafficking and/or any changes/alternatives to these services during the COVID 19 pandemic?**

Not informed at all

Slightly informed

Somewhat informed

Mostly informed

Fully informed

**How do you access information related to services available to victims/survivors of trafficking during COVID 19 pandemic? (If applicable, please select more than one)**

Through contacting individuals on social sites (for example: Facebook, Twitter, Instagram ...)

Through messages posted in thematic groups on social sites (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, etc.)

Through official government or NGO websites

Through online searches (for example: google, yandex, bing, baidu, yahoo!)

Through chats in mobile apps (for example: WhatsApp, Telegram, Viber, WeChat, SnapChat, etc.)

Other (Please explain)

---

## X. EVALUATION OF MIDTERM IMPACT

**In your view, after the COVID 19 pandemic, which of the following would be a priority need for victims of trafficking? (Please select no more than 3 answers)**

- Referral into the National Referral Mechanism or equitable national system
  - Access to services without consenting to participate in the National Referral Mechanism
  - Shelter Accommodation
  - Non-shelter accommodation
  - Legal Services
  - Medical Services
  - Psychological Services
  - Social Services
  - Financial Assistance
  - Education/Employment Training
  - Compensation
  - Regularization of migration status/temporary residence permit
  - Return to the country of origin
  - Other: (Please explain)
- 

**In your view, after the COVID 19 pandemic, which of the following would be a priority need for survivors of trafficking? (Please select no more than 3 answers)**

- Referral into the National Referral Mechanism or equitable national system
  - Access to services without consenting to participate in the National Referral Mechanism
  - Shelter accommodation
  - Non-shelter accommodation
  - Assistance with domestic violence
  - Legal services
  - Medical services
  - Psychological services
  - Social services
  - Financial assistance
  - Education/employment training
  - Employment assistance
  - Childcare
  - Compensation
  - Regularization of residence status/Permanent residence permit
  - Family reunification
  - Return to the country of origin
  - Other: (Please explain)
-

**In your view, what measures can governments implement to better address demand for human trafficking after the COVID 19 pandemic? Please explain:**

---

## **XI. BACKGROUND AND DEMOGRAPHICS**

Please provide demographic information below (optional)

**The country you are currently located in:**

---

Prefer not to answer

**Which country are you a citizen of?**

---

Prefer not to answer

**What is your age?**

18 to 34

35 to 50

51 to 65

66+

Prefer not to say

**Type of trafficking you experienced (If applicable, please select more than one)**

For the purposes of sexual exploitation

For the purposes of labour exploitation

For the purposes of criminal activity

For the purposes of organ harvesting

For the purposes of forced marriage

For the purposes of forced begging

Other (text box)

Prefer not to say

**Please provide any additional comments you would like to add below regarding the situation of victims or survivors of trafficking related to COVID-19 pandemic:**

---

---

Thank you for taking this survey! Your participation has ensured that the voices of survivors of trafficking are reflected in policy development pertaining to victims and survivors of trafficking.