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MEDITERRANEAN INSTITUTE OF GENDER STUDIES



The Coalesce transnational partnership is proud to sharing the results of the project [“COALESCE: Legal, Psycho-social and economic empowerment for the integration of women third country nationals \(TCN\) victims of human trafficking \(VoT\) for sexual exploitation and abuse”](#) (Coalesce Project EC AMIF: 958133), led by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies (MIGS) (Cyprus).

[Women and girls represent 65 per cent of all trafficking victims globally. More than 90 per cent of detected female victims are trafficked for the purpose of sexual exploitation \(UNODC, 2020\).](#) Within months of the invasion of the Ukraine by the Russian Federation, [global online searches](#) for Ukrainian women escort services had increased by 300 per cent. This demand incentivizes traffickers to recruit and exploit victims, [increasingly using online platforms and tools](#). The shift in women’s and girls’ lives from the start of COVID-19 to go online for work, education, and social activities, has opened fresh opportunities for recruitment, control, and exploitation. At the same time, the increased use of technology has also created positive opportunities to provide specialised support services to survivors.

The key contribution of the COALESCE consortium is the development, implementation and evaluation of a **Gender-specific Integration Model (GeSIM)** which expands in three pillars of action: the psychosocial and legal support and the economic empowerment of migrant and asylum seeking women victims of trafficking in human beings (THB) for the purpose of sexual exploitation. This is done through a women-centred needs analysis, integration activities benefiting **116 women**, and over **10 knowledge exchange change events involving 271 national and European actors**.

The COALESCE research that highlights the needs of women

The COALESCE consortium of experts presents an analysis in Cyprus, Ireland, Italy, Germany, Lithuania, and Latvia of 1) the gender-specific needs for the support and integration of female third country national victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation (TCN VoT), and 2) of the local support mechanisms in Cyprus. The analysis adopts a victim-centred and gender-specific approach by directly involving the VoT in the mapping and assessment of existing local support mechanisms in order to identify areas of gender-specific interventions. This report thus highlights gaps in assistance and support in Cyprus, from the perspective of VoT for sexual exploitation, in the areas of 1) psycho-social and legal support; and 2) economic independence (economic empowerment).

Four “mind-the-gap” reports (Italy, Germany, Ireland, Cyprus) identifying and mapping the needs in each country informed by gender-specific measures available: [Country reports](#)

Gender-specific integration model (GeSIM) for victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation and abuse

The COALESCE partnership developed, implemented and evaluated a **Gender-specific Integration Model (GeSIM)** enhanced by input from affected women and specialized knowledge in the field, as well as with recommendations for a sustainable gender-specific implementation EU guidelines and tools, influencing the work of service providers. The GeSIM methodology was implemented in Cyprus, Germany, Ireland, and Italy **providing integration support services to 116 women in total.**

The aim of the GeSIM guidebook is to provide practitioners with essential information on how to work with and support women VoT in a gender- and culturally-sensitive way. The purpose of this handbook is, therefore, fourfold. To serve: 1. As a practical guide to improve the capacity of victim support organisations across the EU to provide gender-specific support services (incl. psychosocial, legal and economic empowerment) tailored to the needs of TCN women VoT for sexual exploitation/abuse contributing also to their early identification. 2. As a means of promoting national and transnational knowledge exchange between relevant actors on the benefits of and commitment to the GeSIM, nurturing collaborative approaches benefitting women VoT. 3. As a resource for governmental, non- as well as inter-governmental organisations to enhance the access to support services for TCN women VoT by setting up gender-specific integration programmes. 4. As a tool for other readers interested in the project findings – such as people working as volunteers, from academia or the general public – to foster their knowledge on the topic of THB and a gender specific approach to integration. This guidebook is a step towards strengthening victim support service providers and your individual capacity as practitioner in taking gender-specific approaches and setting up gender-specific support programmes for women victims of THB.

The GeSIM guidebook is available in: English, German, Greek, Italian, Latvian and Lithuanian [here](#).

Capacity development and interdisciplinary dialogue among relevant actors

The COALESCE consortium promoted national and transnational knowledge exchange between relevant actors on the benefits of the GeSIM Model and the commitment to provide specialised integration services to women affected by THB for sexual exploitation and abuse. Nurturing collaborative approaches benefitting trafficked women, we have reached out to 271 local professionals/stakeholders who benefited from interdisciplinary dialogue through **6 national events** (25-CY, 17-IR, 16-DE, 30-LV, 55-LT, 100-IT) and **1 EU-wide (45) event** [“Supporting Migrant Women Victims of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation in](#)

[Europe](#)” for the promotion of the GeSIM methodology, its practical implementation and direct benefits for women survivors. In this way multi-disciplinary collaboration has been enhanced for improved integration.

Access the COALESCE [Policy Brief I](#) and [Policy Brief II](#).

Blog posts authored by women beneficiaries:

- [Unforgettable – I started from scratch](#), written by a woman accompanied and supported by our partner SOLWODI Deutschland e.V.(Germany).
- [In Time You Will Understand](#), a book excerpt that highlights the story of a woman who learns that she will be entering a forced marriage, and the book follows her as she deals with increasingly difficult circumstances. Armandine Love Saadio documents the life of a survivor of sexual exploitation and abuse, Rita, immersing the reader in the emotional turmoil of her journey, from child to woman.
- [When Does it End?](#), written by a woman supported by partner organisation SOLWODI Deutschland e.V. In her testimony, she talks about the "oath", know as the 'juju'. This oath is taken within a traditional ritual setting in West African countries in order to bind women to their traffickers and make sure that they pay off the debts.

The COALESCE partnership spans seven EU countries and is coordinated by the Mediterranean Institute of Gender Studies in partnership with [the Cyprus Refugee Council](#) (Cyprus), [CARITAS](#) Cyprus, [IROKO Onlus](#) (Italy), [Marta Centre](#) (Latvia), [European Network of Migrant Women](#), [Immigrant Council Ireland](#), [Solwodi](#) (Germany), [KSPSC](#) (Lithuania).



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