

# Participation and Representation of Victims of Trafficking

## Practical Guide



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This Guide on the participation and representation of victims of trafficking was prepared by the “Different & Equal” (D&E) organization, in the framework of the project entitled: “Empowering survivors of trafficking for participation and representation in anti-trafficking work” with the financial support of the Small Grants Program of the Democracy Commission of the US Embassy in Tirana.

Author:  
“Different & Equal” Organization

Consultant:  
Valbona Lenja

Contributor:  
Mariana Meshi  
Milaim Demnushaj  
Lorela Dimo  
“GUXO” Group

Design & Layout:  
Elzana Agolli

Illustration:  
GUXO” Group

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## I. INTRODUCTION

The participation and representation of individuals victim of trafficking in anti-trafficking efforts is a practice encouraged by the “Different & Equal” organization since long ago. Although it has become an integral part of the practice of the organization and its collaborators, participation and representation were yet to be explored in a structured manner and the related experiences were yet to be shared, except sporadically and for the purpose of anti-trafficking projects and activities.

The “Empowering survivors of trafficking for participation and representation in anti-trafficking work” project focused particularly on participation and representation, as critical aspects in.

The investments with regard to the project include: reviewing references and previous practices of participation and representation; building skills for a broader and safer participation and representation; supporting activities designed and carried out exclusively by the victims.

A review performed earlier in the project helped identify the content of this guide, the training content, methods and trainers for trafficking survivors and NRM members and models of trafficking survivors’ participation in the anti-trafficking work.

Naturally, the project’s new focus and approach resulted in new initiatives. The participants who were former victims of trafficking felt the need to establish and identify as a group - “Guxo” group - and to draft the “Alternative Anti-Trafficking Strategy” comprising goals and activities that were exclusively their own, and that could easily be integrated into the plans of anti-trafficking actors.

This guide aligns with the content and form of activities and processes carried out during the project and those to be conducted in the future in order to ensure the sustainability of current achievements and “obtain anti-trafficking outputs”, which require time to develop.

Lastly, this guide makes no attempt to compensate for the gaps or errors in the legal provisions related to participation and representation. The users of this guide will only be able to discover ideas on how to conduct a detailed review of the legal provisions on participation and representation in order to undertake initiatives to fill in the gaps or correct the errors.

## II. ABBREVIATIONS USED

AAGW	Albanian Association of Women and Girls
D&E	Different & Equal
NCATS	National Coalition of Anti-Trafficking Shelters
Mol	Ministry of Interior
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
MoHSP	Ministry of Health and Social Protection
WHO	World Health Organization
UN	United Nations
UNODC	United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime
SS	Social Services
ONATC	Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator

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## III. GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON PARTICIPATION

### Safety in participation

Participation and representation should first and foremost be safe. It is critical that the professionals/organization:

- Develop and utilize risk measurement means;
- Keep a safe participation activity record to be strictly adhered to;
- Provide safe transport;
- Conclude agreements with security providers for interventions in case of danger;
- Keep and strictly implement a participation documentation record

defining risk avoidance measures, e.g. who should take photographs, record videos, who will select them, process them, etc.



### Free will to participate

Participation and representation should be of free will. Professionals should be aware that, often, despite not expressing it, survivors may feel obligated to participate in activities due to viewing it as an expression of their gratitude for the help they have received. The willingness to participate may be expressed either orally or in writing. It is important for the free will to participate to exist throughout the activity and for survivors to understand that they may withdraw from the activity at any time without feeling troubled.



### Ensuring confidentiality in participation

Ensuring confidentiality is both a safety and ethics issue. Prior to deciding on survivor's participation and representation, it is important to assess all risks regarding confidentiality breaching by all parties involved and to agree on the measures to be taken to maintain confidentiality. The "Different &

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Equal” organization has designed and uses formats of risk assessment during participation in various activities. <sup>1</sup>



## Professional facilitation of survivors' group work

Participation and representation are closely related to group facilitation. The professionals who facilitate groups should take into account that: <sup>2</sup>

- Facilitators should view the safety and well-being of the survivors as primary and multidimensional, namely physical, psychological, and as well as evaluated on a case-by-case;
- Facilitators should be acquainted with group work, group development stages and group dynamics;
- Facilitators should be able to recognize the signs/symptoms of trauma, the effects of traumatic events, retraumatization signs and should take measures to avoid retraumatization.



## The long time required for participation

Ensuring effective participation of survivors in the anti-trafficking work is a venture that requires time. Professionals should be willing to spend time to:

- provide clear and correct information on the activities, individuals' roles, risks, and positive and negative consequences;
- adjust work, study and child care schedules;
- heal traumas;
- cope with unforeseen social, health and economic situations.



## Appropriate media portrayal

Participation portrayal in the media may be harmful not only to participation but also to beneficiary protection. In order to ensure media support of participation and representation, it is necessary to work with the media beforehand. The preliminary work with beneficiary participation should involve:

<sup>1</sup> See Annexes

The participatory practice, community development and rights-based approaches often work with and through groups, seeking to change power dynamics and enabling participants to assume leadership roles. For further information, see Our Voices Too Creating a safe space Ideas for the development of participatory group work to address sexual violence with young people, developed for the Our Voices Too Youth Advocacy, Project file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/FINAL-UoB\_OVToo\_CreatingSafeSpaces\_TOOLKIT\_PAGES%20(1).pdf

- Training of the media on ethics and safety and security;
- Conclusion of cooperation agreements on activities;
- Media monitoring.



## Participation equality and non-discrimination

The empowerment process comprises the recognition and development of skills and special talents of every individual. However, this is all the more important in participation and representation.

Professionals should ensure the exploration of activities with greater participation potential. Such activities include photography, sports, theater, dance and protests. Professionals should also ensure that talents do not compete against each other, but instead complement each other.

*“We need respect, not pity”*

F. Group member of “GUXO”



## Financial support for participation and representation

Ensuring participation requires special funding. Professionals should take into account and support the financial needs arising during participation, which may include transportation, printing and photocopy expenses, etc., expenses to eat out, to purchase suitable clothing for the activities, etc.

On the other hand, the professionals should consider survivors as life experts<sup>3</sup> whose work should be paid.



## Communication for participation

Communication constitutes one of the main conditions for participation. Professionals should be careful to avoid:

- Using the term “victim”: In many cases, the use of this term without a specifier, such as “of trafficking, of crime” evokes negative reactions due to its negative insinuation of being “mentally incapable”;
- Using the term “case” to refer to individuals present;
- Comparing beneficiaries with each other;

<sup>3</sup> See Small Steps Make a Big Difference

- 
- Constantly referencing a particular individual as an example of behavior or communication;
  - Ignoring and excluding individuals with communication difficulties from communication.



## Participation and representation preparation

There are personality traits that can be noticed and accounted for early in the relationship with the beneficiary. There are data that, with regard to participation, e.g. in politics, the personality competes with demographic features, such as education, social class, race and income.<sup>4</sup> The personality traits to be recognized for participation are: Extroversion, openness and agreeableness. An extroverted personality is a personality type that can participate and represent. It is a social type that openly expresses opinions and maintains positive emotions. Open-minded personalities are also good participants and representatives due to their curious nature, imagination, non-conformism and drive toward novel ideas. Agreeable personalities are altruistic, warm, collaborative and reliable. Such individuals may feel timid to participate and be represented and tend to withdraw when debates arise, but they are an exceptional form of support and motivation to extroverted and open-minded personalities.

However, it is primarily the knowledge and confidence in own knowledge and skills that prompt participation and representation. The knowledge and skills considered relevant to participation include the rights of victims of trafficking, self-confidence, public speaking, knowledge about trafficking and gender-based violence, anti-trafficking mechanism's operation, knowledge of institutions' functioning, and communication ethics. The following should be minded during training and information sharing:

- Part of service beneficiaries have limited knowledge about the functioning of institutions, while another part may have misunderstandings about it due to their previous experiences;
- The training and information to build the skill to request rights should be practical, with participation methods. It is important for the beneficiaries to assume the role of lecturers or discussion facilitators;
- A level of formality should be maintained during trainings, in order for beneficiaries to learn how to cope in other situations;
- Training and information needs should be continuously assessed and met.

<sup>4</sup> Caprara et al. 1999; Mondak & Halperin 2008; Ha et al. 2013; Fatke 2017; Weinschenk 2017, see <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1467-9477.12118>



## Expansion of participation functions

The participation and representation of individuals victim of trafficking in anti-trafficking efforts have different functions. The assessment that D&E made found that the most commonly occurring functions are: information functions to determine the services to be received; provision of information about the situation; expression of the need for help; expression of the harm, suffering of consequences; application of the right to rate the services received and to complain in case the services are unsuitable.

The assessment found that the concerning protection topics/issues to be resolved through participation include: non-prosecution of traffickers; lack of sensitivity and respect by the Police, Prosecution offices, Courts and Institution clerks toward survivors; lack of understanding of the experiences and emotions of survivors; lack of equal, non-discriminatory treatment; lack of full and quality psychological, medical, economic, legal, educational and safety support; lack of awareness; issues with school functioning as child protector; lack of supportive journalism; employment opportunities.

It is necessary to expand and strengthen participation in other functions as well as: providing a new perspective and alternative view of anti-trafficking issues; identifying and referring victims of trafficking;<sup>5</sup> building the capacities of anti-trafficking actors, etc. The contribution toward building the capacities of professionals may include:

- Sharing information related to recruitment methods and locations, etc., with the professionals;
- Consulting professionals to improve identification conditions - physical premises for interviews, interviewer conduct;
- Establishing and providing professionals with risk or referral information networks;
- Consulting with mobile identification teams.



## Avoidance of insignificant, peripheral roles

Participation may be hindered by assigning peripheral and insignificant roles. Often, under the reasoning that the participation may give rise to safety issues, professionals assign peripheral and insignificant roles to survivors in activities. This is particularly damaging, especially when participation has been central to the preparatory activity stages.

<sup>5</sup> According to a representative of the authorities consulted about this Guide “there would be direct participation if survivors were part of the prevention network and identification would take place based on expertise”



## Assistance with establishing and connecting to formal groups of participation and representation

The “Different & Equal” organization has considered the Albanian Association of Women and Girls (AAGW) as a key partner since 2004. The organization has contributed toward the establishment of the Victim Counselling Group and is currently working on its expansion.

According to the assessment, the establishment of the Victim Counselling Group should be followed by the establishment of other units composed exclusively of victims. According to the assessment, anti-trafficking activities should be re-conceptualized in order for victims to act and be regarded as a separate agency/unit, while the unit itself should collaborate and be integrated with other institutions.

In response to this finding, the “Different & Equal” organization supported the establishment of the “Guxo” group.

The support toward the establishment and operation of other groups should also take into consideration to:

- Dedicate time to foster group cohesion;
- Design a development and sustainability strategy early on;
- Support the group as soon as possible with regard to project implementation and funding request.

- *“We felt great during all project activities... I talked about things I probably never would have shared”*

A. Group member of “GUXO”



## Self-evaluation by service providers and ongoing and sustainable evaluation by monitoring institutions of the safe participation and representation accommodated by the institution/agency.

Service providers may refer to legal provisions in order to develop and use special tools to measure participation and representation. The instruments should measure at least: the knowledge of beneficiaries regarding the service provider and work standards to be applied; employees and functions thereof; time spent in individual or group counselling meetings; documentation used; information about how decisions are made and appealed; the stance of

employees regarding the established beneficiary groups and alliances, etc..<sup>6</sup>

In addition, service providers may establish a separate non-participation response body - by both parties - for the staff that failed to ensure participation conditions and the beneficiaries that did not exercise their right and did not fulfill the participation obligation. The system should be recognized and accepted by the bodies monitoring service providers.

<sup>6</sup> See Annexes for a standard participation measurement format that may be used

## IV. PARTICIPATION IN TRAFFICKING PREVENTION



### General considerations on the participation and representation in prevention

Prevention is one of the anti-trafficking areas discussed about the most by trafficking survivors.<sup>7</sup> As regards prevention participation, professionals should bear in mind that:

- Trafficking is often viewed as closely related to poverty, thus being unavoidable;
- Prevention may be narrowly viewed as just awareness-raising campaigns;
- Prevention can and should target trafficking survivors as the most vulnerable category;
- Prevention can and should include the establishment of safe communities.

### Models of participation and representation in prevention



#### Research and studies conducted by survivors

Research and studies conducted by survivors are a new form of contribution supported by “Different & Equal”:

In the framework of the “Small steps can make a big difference” project, an action research project with the participation of youth (YPAR) in collaboration with the University of Bedfordshire in the United Kingdom, survivors of sexual violence, including trafficking, attended a training project and conducted a survey to gather evidence on the experiences of youth in criminal justice regarding sexual violence and trafficking. This initiative was prompted by a previous project, “Our Voices Too”, which highlighted the need for youth-informed testimonies.

<sup>7</sup> As also found by the assessment in the framework of this project



## Media interviews

Survivors’ media interviews have both a powerful effect and are also delicate and difficult to conduct. A previous WHO document defined for the first time the ethical and safety principles with regard to journalistic interviews of women survivors. The rules include:

- Do no harm;
- Know your subject and assess the risks;
- Prepare referral information;
- Adequately select and prepare interpreters and co-workers;
- Ensure anonymity and confidentiality;
- Get informed consent;
- Listen to and respect each woman’s assessment of her situation and risks to her safety;
- Do not re-traumatize a woman;
- Be prepared for emergency intervention;
- Put information collected to good use.



## Awareness-raising campaigns

Organization “Different&Equal” has supported the awareness-raising campaigns carried out by survivors since the design stage.<sup>8</sup> For example, the campaign entitled “I am Like You! I retook back my life! So can you!” The campaign was strongly supported by the Office of the National Anti-Trafficking Coordinator/ Ministry of Interior. Photo exhibitions and poetry created by the survivors were also part of the campaign. The exhibition and the album created based on it displayed the trafficking, exploitation, violence and abuse as experienced by the survivors. The campaign also included the creation and screening of a short 30-minute video of actual facts regarding the rate of modern slavery, which was run for a month in the monitors of several bus lines in Tirana.

The awareness-raising installation #UNËJAMSITI! created and placed in the premises of “Rinia” Park and later in the premises of Tirana Police Directorate was also part of the campaign.

In the framework of the “16 Days of Activism against Gender-Based Violence” a number of awareness-raising campaigns conceptualized by trafficking survivors members of the AAGW were carried out.

<sup>8</sup> See also <http://differentandequal.org/sq/mbeshtetja-e-viktimave-te-trafikimit-per-te-dizenjuar-dhe-zhvilluar-nje-fushate-ndergjegjesimi/>



### Recommendations

- Campaigns should include a variety of expression means;
- Campaigns should target a broad range of individuals and groups;
- Campaigns should include more information on the way in which trafficking and traffickers operate.



### Awareness-raising social network account

Message communication through social network accounts is an important method because: All organizations or groups, even if informal, have a social network account; Social networks constitute the most popular and quickest way to reach youth; The platforms enable privacy and keeping the identity private.



### Recommendations

- Ensure that the account is managed by one person and that the post content is provided and reviewed by a panel of survivors;
- Ensure that the post content includes, at least: ways of social media use, how to block threats; how to handle invitations; not sharing addresses; managing the emotions caused by social networks;
- Provide support and consultation to the person managing the account.



### Film

Participating via a film is a good way because: It is a communication mean preferred by youth and the general public; It enables conveying several messages all at once; May be modified until confident that the output meets expectations; May be created using the tools available and technological skills of the survivors; There are many survivors who prefer writing essay stories and these skills can be developed to achieve script writing of movies



### Recommendations

- Take measures to maintain anonymity;
- Support scripts based on true stories;
- Share messages of hope.

## V. PARTICIPATION IN VICTIM PROTECTION

### General considerations on the participation and representation in protection

Increasing participation and representation and in general, increasing the contribution of victims toward victim protection requires the acknowledgment and welcoming of such contribution from the institutions and agencies that traditionally offer protection. While the provision of quality services cannot be understood without the involvement and participation of the individual/beneficiary at all times, institutions and agencies may explore their options and invest in:

- Ongoing assessment of the participation of the individual victim of trafficking in the assistance process;
- Taking actual steps to increase participation and representation in project designing and defense policies;
- Defining and imposing penalties for non-participation or non-representation or violation of participation and representation safety rules;
- Defining a communication protocol/language to encourage respect and participation;
- Enhancing the knowledge of victims regarding the institutional obligations of institutions;
- Preparing victims to participate in the identification process;
- Documenting and keeping the protection documentation by the survivors/beneficiaries themselves;
- Identifying sources of protection and updating the relevant information.

### Models of participation and representation in protection

#### Mentoring



Mentoring is an effective method of participating in protecting victims of trafficking. Mentors are individuals who have survived trafficking, have received reintegration support by assistance organizations and who wish to provide emotional support to other individuals (mentees). Mentors develop their support

skills through a special training program delivered by the organization. Mentors meet with the individuals they “mentor” in accordance with a defined development schedule. During the meetings they might simply have a good time together, visit the office for a particular service, seek employment for the mentee, etc. Mentoring takes place under the supervision of the organization staff. The reasonings behind this the use of this form of participation are numerous: it gives the mentee a strong sense of independence; it fosters the belief that “you can do it”; it gives the mentee a strong sense of being understood by the other person - the mentor has had similar experiences; it enables the realization that services are provided as requested/needed.

*- “I am currently receiving help and it makes me feel great... however, in the future I wish to have the opportunity to help other girls in need”*

S. Group member of “GUXO”

In order for this form of support to function properly, the following should be especially accounted for:

- Mentees should be properly informed about the functions of mentoring and role of the Mentor in comparison with the roles of the organization staff.
- The mentor’s and mentee’s situation should be properly assessed in order to ensure compatibility;<sup>9</sup>



### Recommendations

- Stay in continuous contact with the Mentor and Mentee to provide them with the opportunity to receive instructions, consult about their relationship or progress, etc.;
- Do not assign tasks that the Mentor is unable to perform;
- Do not request the Mentor to make payments for or loan money to the Mentee.

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<sup>9</sup> See Different & Equal’s publication “Mentoring Trafficking Victims” for further information <http://differentandequal.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/3.Mentorimi-i-Viktimave-Te-Trafikimit.pdf>



## Participation in protection project designing

Participating in protection project designing has both short- and long-term effects on protection. In the short-term, this type of participation gives a sense of being valued, helps with the understanding of how the assistance works and strengthens the relationship between survivors and assistance staff/professionals. In support of this form of participation, professionals must take into account that:

- Survivors are not familiar with calls for projects, opportunities, etc.
- Survivors are not familiar with system functioning or donor receptions, etc.;
- Individuals receiving help find it difficult to participate in discussions regarding assistance project designing;
- Survivors may have low self-esteem.



### Recommendations

- Provide complete and clear information regarding calls for projects, opportunities, etc.;
- Invest in translations, in introducing system functioning, donor receptions, etc.;
- Foster a safe and mutual atmosphere of hospitality, and mutual support;
- Do not set short and quick deadlines for this type of participation;
- Do not hold wrong expectations.



## Consultation on the functioning of the accommodation centers

“Different & Equal” uses consultation related to the center’s functioning as an efficient method of participation and contribution of survivors to protection.



### Recommendations

- Organize ongoing meetings/consultations;
- Use different methods of consultation and inclusiveness;
- Be open to changes.



## Self-support through art

In addition to being an efficient way of raising awareness, art is also an efficient way for self-support. Art relieves stress – reduces the level of cortisol<sup>10</sup>, gives a sense of achievement and feeling good with oneself, gives value to the individual’s uniqueness, proves that we can turn an idea into a physical object – that ideas might be fulfilled, helps in socializing, helps in letting things flow<sup>11</sup>. In encouraging self-help through art, professionals must take into account that:

- Different individuals like different forms of art: drawing, painting, writing, photography, carving, instruments, dancing, fashion, knitting, jewelry-making.
- Individuals may also want to destruct what they have created as a way to remove words, images, colors.



## Recommendations

- Survivors must understand that they are not required to be artists;
- It must not be understood as an art class - survivors do not learn techniques to present the outer world - they are allowed to express the inner world;
- It is not necessary to have a strict place for activities;
- Art therapy is not effective to all individuals.



## Dance

The Dance/Movement Therapy is a form of expressive arts using body movement to express emotion and to heal. Various studies have been published on the use of dance for issues like trauma, sexual abuse, child abuse<sup>12</sup>. Mary Whitehouse, a pioneer in the dance/movement therapy has developed the principle that in order for the dance/movement to have a therapeutic effect, feelings must be put into movement and not just the creation of a movement

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10 The increase to the level of cortisol or the stress hormone is related to the sense of fatigue, memory, concentration and learning problems, nervousness, anger and aggression, physical pain - headache or stomach ache, immunity system weakening, and as a result of illness, allergy, etc.

11 <https://thewholeu.uw.edu/2022/04/11/art-for-self-care-and-mental-health/#:~:text=Because%20of%20these%20feel%2Dgood,and%20resilience%20in%20aging%20adults.>

12 The American Dance Therapy Association describes the dance/movement therapy as “the psychotherapeutic use of movement to promote emotional, social, cognitive, and physical integration of the individual [https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1286&context=expressive\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1286&context=expressive_theses)

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that is satisfactory to the eye<sup>13</sup>. Dance is a method in which a large majority of survivors can participate.



### Recommendations

- Make sure to have an experienced individual that may create the choreography;
- Make sure to select an expressive music, which resonates with the feelings of all participants.



### Campaigns targeting victims

Communication through campaigns is an efficient method to participate in protection. This is due to the fact that communication reaches a large number and a wide range of individuals in different situations.

For the first time in Albania, from 19 April to 30 July 2018, a group of girls survivors of trafficking, with the support of “Different and Equal” organization, organized the campaign with the slogan: “I am like you! I did it! So can you!”. The campaign included a series of activities: Photography exhibition with the same title as the campaign slogan, “Photo voice” (story of a victim of trafficking told through a photo album), posters, photo album, poems, etc..

Another example is the campaign #WITH YOU. This is an initiative that was realized in the framework of the month of Women’s History, March. Its content was dedicated to victims of violence, sexual abuse and trafficking. The main purpose was to raise awareness of the public and the victims themselves about the rights and opportunities they have.

When implementing campaigns as a method of participation in protection, professionals must take into account the following:

- Campaign requires long-term preparation;
- People may hesitate to participate because of security issues;
- Special attention must be paid to choosing slogans;
- The presence of authorities in campaigns must be required.

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13 [https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1286&context=expressive\\_theses](https://digitalcommons.lesley.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1286&context=expressive_theses)



## Recommendations

- Give messages of hope and trust for a better future;
- Provide contacts for assistance;
- Make sure that campaigns are also reflected in social networks.



## Open letters to victims

Open letters written from survivors of trafficking to survivors of trafficking are works through which they can encourage, give advice, promote self-identification and receiving assistance, demonstrating solidarity, avoiding solitude.

Open letters can be posted on social networks, in exhibitions, and can be used as leaflets to be disseminated, etc.

In support of this form of participation in protection, professionals must take into account that:

- In general, most of the survivors have difficulties in expressing;
- Letters may express many personal feelings and may sound more like self-support than a contribution to others



## Group communications with employees from assistance-providing institutions

Group communications of survivors with institutions’ representatives are a good method of contributing in protection. Through these fora, the institutions’ representatives have the opportunity to have a better understanding of the complexity of needs and concerns of survivors, obstacles they may encounter in receiving services, needs on procedure simplification, etc.

This form of participation has been early used from “Different & Equal”. Therefore, on 9 December 2020, an “online workshop” titled “Gender-based violence in the eyes of survivors of violence and trafficking” was organized. This was a discussion among the victims of violence and trafficking and institutions’ representatives, NGOs and agencies engaged in their protection. This activity was attended by 20 guests and a group of victims, who had the opportunity to attend the activity live in the premises of the social club of the “Different & Equal” organization, as well as to ask direct questions to participants.

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*-“I think that our contribution will better serve to institutions and organizations to improve their work on protection of the victims of trafficking”*

E. Group member of “GUXO”

The discussion fora held with institutions must take into account that:

- Survivors are prepared for the communication with institutions’ representatives - preparation consists in exploring issues that are important;



### Recommendations

- Give the message of being open and welcoming to criticism;
- Do not make promises you cannot keep.



### Open letters to institutions

Open letters to institutions are another form of transmitting the perspective of survivors to authorities and participating in assistance. It is an effective method because it: gives the survivors the opportunity to self-reflect on the situation, causes; raises the public awareness on problems that they might not know.



### Recommendations

- Provide support in drafting open letters;
- Obtain information on the effects of the letter and submit it to the writing survivors.



## Awareness-raising in suburban areas

Raising awareness by survivors in suburban areas is a good method for the following reasons: The vast majority of victims come from suburban areas; Suburban areas may have been reached through projects of organizations, but the organizations are not very informed on how the suburban areas function.



### Recommendations

- Movement can be organized through public transportation to avoid exposure;
- Small groups must be used in suburban areas;
- Awareness-raising groups must be equipped with brochures;
- Groups must be equipped with computers, projectors;
- Meetings must include sessions on sharing opinions;
- Groups must have contact points in the community to make the necessary preparations;
- Information on community, in particular on security, must be collected.



## Meetings with the Police

Meetings with the Police are a good form of participation having an impact on protection because the police is usually the first contact point, which must play an identifying, supporting and protecting role for the survivors. When encouraging and supporting meetings of the victims with the police, professionals must also take into account that:

- Meetings with the police may be associated with fear because of previous experiences;
- Policemen may not have the appropriate sensitive attitude towards survivors;
- Policemen may not know the anti-trafficking role of survivors and may prejudge their contribution skills.



## Recommendations

- Take measures so that the meeting includes not only discussions, but also incorporates other means of communication, photographs, movies, etc.
- Take measures so that survivors meet not only the anti-trafficking police, but the policemen of police stations as well, who are practically the first contact point;
- Take measures that the meeting transmits at minimum the following messages: the police must be a good listener; the police must not oppose victims; the police must respect the rights of victims;
- Inform survivors of the institutional obligations of the police;
- Be familiar in advance with the topics and issues that survivors want to discuss.



## Protests

The participation of survivors in a protest is a good method for the following reasons: The survivors might be mixed with the staff of organizations so that they cannot be identified; Has a stronger effect than separate awareness-raising activities; Attracts the media attention; Leaves no room for problem reduction by authorities; Strengthens the sense of solidarity and belonging.



## Recommendations

- Make sure that protests are peaceful, not violent;
- Make sure that protests are organized before the institutions;
- Make sure that protests are well-organized;
- Make sure that protests give clear messages;
- Make sure that protests are organized on ongoing basis;
- Make sure to carefully prepare posters, materials;
- Make sure to obtain permission;
- Make sure to inform partners.

## VI. PARTICIPATION IN THE INVESTIGATION AND CONVICTION OF TRAFFICKERS

### General considerations on the participation and representation in the investigation and conviction of traffickers

Amendments to legislation have resulted in a new attitude towards increasing the participation of victims in criminal investigations and proceedings against traffickers.

On the other hand, it is well-identified that victims of trafficking, who are appropriately supported and protected, are more likely to report the crime of trafficking and to contribute in investigation by identifying criminals and testifying against them. Such participation and contribution starts with identifying victims as such. Failing to recognize the victims not only reduces their participation, but it creates premises that the entire system lose the opportunity for evidence and facts against criminals.

When encouraging and supporting the participation of survivors in criminal investigations and proceedings against traffickers, professionals must take into account that:

- Survivors find it difficult to trust authorities;
- Participation in criminal proceedings might negatively affect the whole family of the victim;
- Survivors are not aware of the way the justice system functions;
- Survivors may accept the status given to them without understanding what it means victim - what trafficking means, and like what the real relationship was with the trafficker, the risk posed by them, etc.;
- Participation in criminal investigations and proceedings may result in the provision of support and sometimes assistance may be conditioned by participation. Sometimes survivors have faced situations like this: "You either collaborate or you are no victim";
- The criminal justice system is mainly built to control the crime and not necessarily to support victims and remains focused on the perpetrators of the criminal offense.

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## Models of participation and representation in the investigation and conviction of traffickers



### Pressing charges, testifying

Pressing charges, testifying is the most widely used method of survivors' participation in the investigation and conviction of traffickers. When handling such form of participation, professionals must take into account that:

- Investigations might initiate ex-officio, without pressing any charges;
- Survivors might not be aware or might not know to articulate psychological, physical and financial damage caused by trafficking;
- Survivors might not be informed of the rights to support and counseling, legal aid and during the criminal proceedings.



### Recommendations

- Inform what trafficking means, which are the methods used by traffickers;
- Inform on damages caused to victims by trafficking;
- Make sure survivors receive the necessary psychological and social support during the criminal proceedings;
- Make sure the survivor is not feeling obliged to continue with their participation;
- Make sure that support and help to be continued even after the finalization of the criminal proceedings.



### Studies related to the investigation and punishment of traffickers

Another practiced method of participation is the studies on the investigation and conviction of traffickers. A survey to gather evidence on the experiences of youth in criminal justice regarding sexual violence and trafficking is mentioned above.

During this project, "Guxo" Group started to gather opinions on the conviction of traffickers in exhibitions through a survey prepared by them.



## Recommendations

- Survivors must be prepared and supported in their research work by professionals who are experts in participatory studies;
- Measures to preserve physical and emotional wellbeing of survivor researcher involved in research work;
- Survivors must be supported in research work reporting in the format they feel comfortable with;
- Survivors must decide on their own on the focus of research work.

## VII. ANNEXES

### Example of Risk Assessment before the involvement - using the project “Our voices too”

Risk and Needs Assessment	
Brief information (no names included)	
Worker conducting the assessment	
Initials of the youth	
Gender	
Ethnicity	
Age	
Disability	
Involvement with the service (agency), the reason of identification	
Name of key worker	
Expected period of stay in the project	

Needs associated with involvement in the project and how they can be met	
Details of communication preferences and requirements (writing, reading)	
Is the translation of informational materials on youth to another language required?	
Requirement for transportation or meeting/work premises	
Potential need that third parties are present in the meeting	
Other things that the team must take into account to ensure full and safe participation of the youth	

Risks associated with participation in the project and how such risks can be managed	
Is there any potential for emotional stress? If yes, how can they be avoided?	
Is there any risk that someone can find out about the participation how can this lead to a potential damage?	
Is there any negative effect on family relationships?	
Is there any negative effect on therapeutic relationships?	
Interference with current legal proceedings – INVOLVEMENT IN "LIVE INVESTIGATION"	
Are there specific risks in the group premises or because of the group composition?	
Is there any thing that the team must be aware of to ensure sensitive interventions?	

Considerations and other requirements related to permission:	
Has the youth been assessed as capable to provide informed permission whether information was provided to them in the proper format?	
Is the parent/custodian permission necessary?	
Are there risks associated with requesting the parent/custodian permission?	
If the parent/custodian permission is necessary, can a worker facilitate the granting of such permission?	
<b>Practical things:</b>	
Can a worker make the first step to approach the youth based on the information the youth has on the project?	
<b>Follow-up support:</b>	
Is the worker capable/the right one to provide follow-up support?	

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Does the worker like to follow the youth after the sessions to make sure that they are well?	
Is any form of support and follow-up necessary, and who can provide it?	
<b>Are there any requirements or concerns by the worker?</b>	

## Example of a statement of an informed decision on participation:

### INFORMATION ON ACTIVITIES AND CONFIRMATION OF ENGAGEMENT FROM THE BENEFICIARIES IN THE PROJECT “EMPOWERING SURVIVORS OF TRAFFICKING FOR PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION IN ANTI-TRAFFICKING WORK”

The “Different & Equal” Organization is implementing the project “Empowering survivors of trafficking for participation and representation in anti-trafficking work”, funded by the US Embassy in Albania.

The project aims at creating a proper environment for the safe participation and representation of trafficking survivors in anti-trafficking work and the provision of services to victims of trafficking, as well as bringing victims of trafficking into a more prominent and useful role in protecting survivors of trafficking.

Through its implementation, the project aims at improving the work with victims of trafficking while considering their needs. The group of female survivors of trafficking, who will be part of the project, will be engaged in activities where they can express their opinions on how they themselves consider the need for improvement, in particular with regard to the provision of services, method of communication with the employees of relevant institutions, respecting their dignity and non-discrimination. The project aim is that the services and protection of victims of trafficking be organized in a form that is more convenient to the victims, while considering their opinion. Institutions must also consider the opinions of victims and female survivors of trafficking when working with them in a simple way and satisfactory to them, while maintaining open and free communication, based on mutual respect. The fight against trafficking can be improved and the services to victims will be of a higher quality if their opinion is taken into account.

The project will be developed during the period June 2021 - May 2022. Some activities will be organized during its implementation with the direct engagement of a group of female survivors of trafficking, who are part of the reintegration process of the “Different & Equal” Organization.

The activities in which the group of female survivors of trafficking will be involved are as follows:

- **Needs assessment on the involvement of female survivors in the anti-trafficking work.** This activity requires the organization of consultative meetings with the group of female survivors of trafficking who, on their free will, will participate in project activities. During such meetings, the group of female survivors will have the chance to freely express their ideas and opinions, and to give suggestions on how they see the work with victims, including here the method of communication between workers and victims themselves, forms of services and assistance they must receive, as well as other issues concerning the survivors of trafficking.
- **Design of a practical guide on the involvement of survivors of trafficking in the anti-trafficking work.** The draft guide will be preliminary consulted with the female survivors of trafficking to incorporate their opinions, ideas and suggestions in this document. The guide will serve as a

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work template for the employees of relevant institutions, but it will also allow victims the chance to be more informed on how they can get involved in the anti-trafficking work, have a clearer understanding of the services they benefit and the obligations of institutions to serve them.

- **Organization of training (4-days training) with different topics on the empowerment of the group of female survivors of trafficking, who will be part of the project.** Training will be delivered by the chosen expert and project staff. The training delivery methodology and training module (content) will be preliminary consulted with the group of female survivors of trafficking. Training will assist in enhancing the skills of survivors to participate in activities and to freely express their opinion on issues of concern to them. Training will prepare the group of survivors to organize awareness-raising campaigns and activities on trafficking prevention.
- **Mentoring program on other trafficking survivors** During the second six months of the project, a mentoring program will be organized for the survivors of trafficking with the direct involvement of the group of trained female survivors, who will play the role of mentor for other female survivors of trafficking. With the support of the project staff, the group of female survivors of trafficking will, after the completion of training, help other survivors of trafficking in supporting them to handle difficulties and problems resulting from the trafficking. By giving their example of handling difficulties, they will serve as a model and inspiration for other female survivors of trafficking, as well as increase self-confidence to be capable of giving their contribution to fight trafficking, while helping others.
- **Awareness-raising campaigns and activities with the direct involvement of female survivors.** In the last 3 months of the project implementation, some awareness-raising activities will be organized with the direct involvement of the female survivors of trafficking (trained group). In such activities, the group of female survivors involved in the project will be the main protagonists in organizing activities and supporting the staff, and they will have the opportunity to present their ideas and suggestions to improve the anti-trafficking work and protection of victims of trafficking. While raising their voices, the group of survivors will have the opportunity to raise the awareness of others, thus influencing the society on how we all must get involved to fight trafficking and to protect victims of trafficking.

## 1. Confirmation of participation in project activities

Upon being informed of the project, I hereby declare that:

- I have read the information on the project, and the project staff has explained to me the activities to be organized and my role as a participant in this project.
- I understand the purpose of the project and I am very satisfied to be part of the group being involved in the development of activities planned during the project development period, until its completion. I also understand that I can withdraw from the project if I am no more satisfied in participating.

- I understand that I will not be requested to share any personal experience related to the situation I have experienced. At the same time, I understand that the project focuses on the issues of trafficking in persons and that subject to discussion might be topics of a very sensitive nature to me or the rest of the group.
- I have taken into account and discussed with my manager and the project staff all the implications arising from the participation in this project. In addition, I am informed of activities, challenges, needs and benefits related to my involvement in this project.
- I know that I can contact my manager if I feel bored or if I need support at any moment during the project implementation. I understand that the project staff will support me if I need anything during my involvement in project activities.
- I understand that my acceptance to participate in this project will not affect the services I receive from the organization or my relationships with the professionals assisting me.
- I understand that, as part of the project, I would be requested to participate in discussions and I would be asked questions to give my opinion during the development of project activities. The project staff and expert will explain and discuss with me on the engagement, including participation in discussions.
- I understand that I am not obliged to participate in discussions, if I am not willing to. I know that if I participate in discussions, this means that I agree with my involvement and I am satisfied that the information given by me is used for project purposes, thus respecting the obligation to preserve confidentiality. I understand that I can withdraw my consent from allowing such information be used at any time.
- I am aware that the signing of this document does not involve me in any legal form or other way, but it is just a confirmation for participation in project activities, which helps in increasing my knowledge and skills to contribute and to actively participate in preventing the phenomenon of trafficking in persons, as well as to improve the protection of survivors of trafficking.

Name Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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**CIP Katalogimi në botim BK Tiranë**

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**Different & Equal**

Rr. Fortuzi, Godina 24, Kati 3, Hyrja nr. 4, Ap.4 Tirane

Tel. 00355 4 2221892

Email: [contact@differentandequal.org](mailto:contact@differentandequal.org)