

INTO THE GREEN LIGHT

NEXT STEPS

JAARVERSLAG 2022



Introduction

Grace's story

Grace, a 34 years old Romanian woman, has recently exited exploitation. She was exploited since the age of 15 when she was manipulated and coerced by her partner and his parents to practice forced prostitution in Romania and abroad. For years Grace tried to escape this abusive relationship and create a safer environment for her and her daughters, but was unsuccessful as the trafficker leveraged control of their children in order to manipulate her to stay. After finally managing to escape the trafficker and his family, Grace called the police to report the abuse. Partners in the police reached out to IJM and asked for support with the case. **Grace and her daughters were provided secure shelter** in the Betania project/Oradea, away from the abuser and his family. IJM collaborated with law enforcement in order to ensure Grace evidence was heard and an investigation was started, also to secure potential future arrests of perpetrators.

Since May 2022, **Grace has received social assistance, psychological counselling, legal assistance and is developing sewing skills with the purpose of finding a workplace.** In October 2022 Grace was employed as Social Worker at the social project from Oradea helping with offering assistance to the other victims, helping the project in developing a victim centred approach and is involved in the sewing project. The collaboration between IJM-Dorcas-Betania through Next Steps Romania project was proven beneficiary for Grace and her daughters.

Main Achievements

Challenges & Learnings

Prevention activities

We organized prevention activities that reached more people than targeted for 2022. Through the 25 Awareness and Prevention Campaigns 1.010 people were reached. We developed creative prevention materials that can be used for future Awareness Raising Campaigns.

Next Steps presented among professionals

More than 100 care professionals from various chain partners in the Netherlands have been informed about the existence and offer of Next Steps. The possibility of referrals was used several times by these organisations: several women have been referred to us for help. Next

The conferences

helped to develop a strong network that is needed for case referrals. professionals from law enforcement, prosecutors, judicial officials, embassy representatives and professionals and students from Law, Social Sciences, Political Sciences were trained in subjects related to fighting human trafficking.

The number of cases that received support

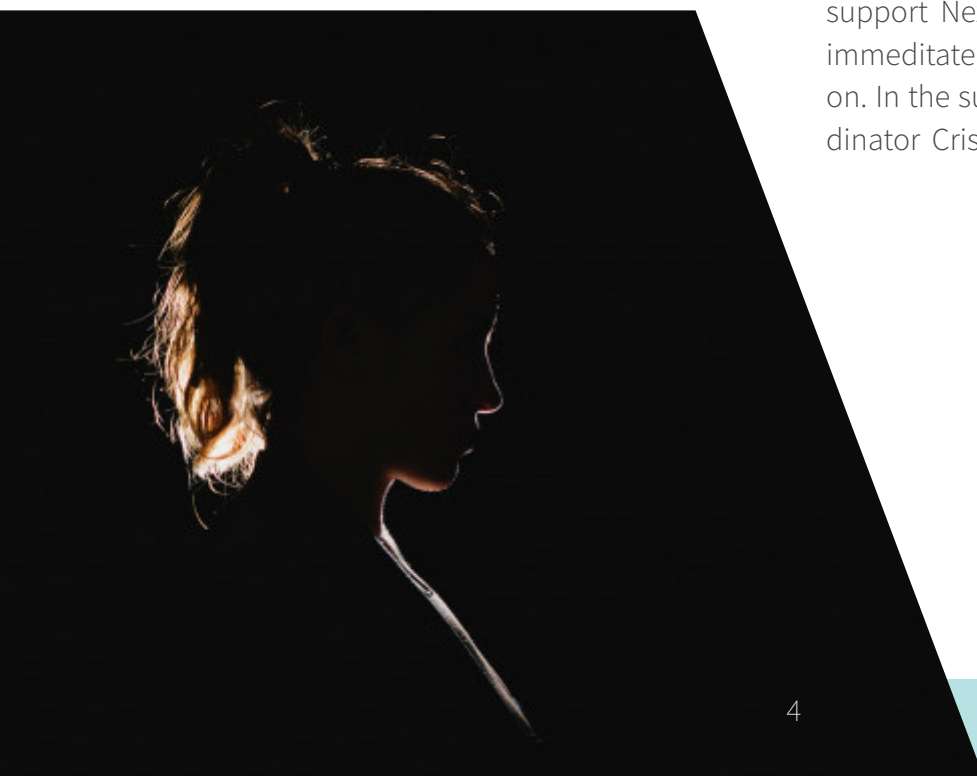
The number of supported cases at Betania, Salvation Army or through referrals of IJM to partners is higher than indicators set for 2022. This is probably because the strong networks developed through this Next Steps program.

Start of sewing atelier

Next Steps started a sewing atelier in Oradea to offer alternative work also to women who want to get out of prostitution. The Salvation Army has several Second-hand shops (Reshare) in the Netherlands. It was agreed that we offer the sewing products from the sewing atelier in the Reshare shops. Sample products have also been sent from the Netherlands to Oradea, so that the products match the demand in the Netherlands. The ultimate goal of the sewing workshop is, that the women who participate can get a salary, by selling the products at Reshare. Meanwhile, the first products have been sold in the Netherlands.

Refugees could be supported immediately

As EO Metterdaad (EOM) made funds available to support Next Steps, refugees could be supported immediately in this unexpected/new intervention. In the summer EOM portrayed Next Steps coordinator Cristina on TV; this increased the funding



Main Achievements Challenges & Learnings

Security concerns regarding outreach and beneficiaries.

There were security concerns from both staff and beneficiaries regarding outreach and bringing in new beneficiaries to the shelter. To diminish these risks a Security Officer in Oradea will be hired, who is responsible for the protection of both beneficiaries and staff. Additionally, a security system will be installed.

Covid-19 related challenges for both staff and beneficiaries.

Several people from the staff were on sick leave because of Covid-19, which delayed activities. Many of the beneficiaries were infected with Covid-19, those were offered food packages at the door and counselling by phone. Covid-19 affected the number of participants at activities and group meetings in especially the first part of 2022.

Staff capacity

It is challenging to find competent staff, and to invest in development of staff to prepare them to work with victims of human trafficking.

War between Russia and Ukraine

With Russia's Invasion of Ukraine in February 2022 and the subsequent high flow of refugees transiting or settling in Romania, IJM has adapted its implementation plan and activities. As of January 10, 2023, 14 million Ukrainians have been displaced from their homes¹. Of these, 7,9 million have left Ukraine for destinations other than Russia, primarily Poland, Romania, and Moldova. This group is comprised of 90% women and children. Many of these are hoping to obtain protected refugee status in Western European countries. Unfortunately, the countries along Ukraine's western borders, through which they must transit, are known hubs for criminal trafficking networks. These women and children represent vulnerable victims for the criminal enterprises which have redoubled their recruitment efforts to prey on distressed migrant populations. Hence, Trafficking in Human Beings (THB) and Gender-Based Violence (GBV) have been identified as two of the most important protection and safeguarding risks associated with the Ukraine Refugee Crisis. Therefore, International Justice Mission has been in dialogue with authorities and the refugee population to develop a model of protection to support increasingly vulnerable populations. Early-stage interventions included:

Emergency Aid – IJM responds to needs identified by partners to provide food, medicine, financial support, beds, washing machines, and SIM cards. Protection Officers also intervene to resolve critical cases requiring specialized social and/or medical services.

Transport – IJM has transported and facilitated safe transport for refugees traveling from inside Ukraine to initial safe partner organizations. IJM implemented safety measures and supported onward journeys for refugees to western destinations. Guidance and implementation has also included safe travel preparation for backup of traveling documents, safe numbers and support persons in final destination locals.

Safeguarding – IJM has guided partner organizations in developing their own safeguarding protocols, to ensure staff and volunteers do not represent a potential threat to the refugee populations.

Trafficking Awareness – In collaboration with the Government of Romania, IJM has developed materials highlighting the signs of trafficking, and disseminated this information at the border, in shelters and churches and through the community.

Training – IJM has delivered and sponsored training on trauma-informed care and navigating the TPS process for partner organizations and local churches.

1. UN statistics

Progress & Achievements

The Next Steps project is built on three major pillars. In the following pages, we explain our progress on each pillar within the project.

Offering perspective to recovery & access to aftercare

The expertise to implement and develop step out programs for victims of human trafficking and sexual exploitation, and reduce vulnerability through access to economic opportunities such as skills development, vocational training, employment or entrepreneurship that would help to build a new future and access to an improved financial situation.



Addressing root causes via prevention and reducing vulnerability

expertise in prevention programming and targeting self-esteem and building empowerment among vulnerable group. increase awareness raising on human trafficking and sexual exploitation

Justice System Transformation

We want to work with law enforcement through building capacity within the government to be able to address human trafficking in a sustainable way and working towards structural and sustainable approaches to prevent human trafficking and sexual exploitation.

1

Offering direct assistance to victims of human trafficking

IJM, alongside partners, has offered support to twelve (17) victims of trafficking. Victims that were supported are young women residing in the north and east side of Romania, who were recruited in Romania and trafficked both internally and to other countries of destination such as the Italy and the UK. IJM had the opportunity to support survivors of cross-border trafficking and accompany them through the criminal justice

process, while using casework as a diagnostic tool to identify gaps in prosecution and victim support. These learnings will, in turn, inform capacity building initiatives.

During the past year, IJM has made significant progress towards project activities of engaging law enforcement and understanding the training needs of criminal justice system actors, supporting victims of trafficking and promoting collaborative casework. The progress that was achieved was done through the following:

Building a Collaborative Criminal Justice Response to Trafficking in Persons in Romania Conference. IJM organized the “Building a Collaborative Criminal Justice Response to Trafficking in Persons” National Conference, in collaboration with Government of Romania partners. The conference brought together law enforcement, prosecution and judicial officials, practitioners and embassy representatives with the purpose of showcasing good practice models and strengthening collaboration among criminal justice systems actors in Romania and abroad.

The two-day conference hosted speakers from national and international criminal justice system entities, focusing on sharing best practices

and identifying key areas for improvements in collaborative casework, including cross-border issues, with both FBI and Homeland Security representatives giving presentations on the importance of financial investigations and accountability and victim-centered response in cases of trafficking in persons. The conference also included a dedicated session on good practice models of Romanian-Dutch cross-border collaboration with Romanian and Dutch prosecutors presenting together

Working collaboratively with partners and law enforcement. IJM has supported law enforcement and partner NGOs in multiple cases. The support stemmed from legal services, to safeguarding of victims and mentorship on collaborative casework. This is significant as it allows for trauma-informed approach to be applied and survivors to be protected against re-traumatization.

2

The conference entitled “Responding to The Ukrainian Refugee Crisis with A Safe And Educated Approach That Helps Prevent Human Trafficking took place in November.

The aim of the conference was to facilitate communication between state institutions and NGOs, as well as spreading information related to the prevention of human trafficking among Ukrainian citizens. During the meeting, various topics were addressed around prevention and psychological effects of human trafficking. At the end of the conference, new connections between the organizations were successfully established, as well as opening up and discussing legal and assistance issues for Ukrainian

Participating in the conference “Inter-institutional collaboration in the fight against human trafficking” organized by Betania in Oradea. The event took 3 days, and it had different targeted audience from students and specialists in the field of Law, Public Administration to policemen from different departments. The topics covered by the IJM team, represented by one social worker and the security manager were: The approach based on the understanding of trauma and Physical protection of the victim of human trafficking.

3

Time and energy has been invested several activities organised in Romania for training and courses on various subjects.

1. **Training on developing safety nets during one of the activities for women and teenagers for a group of refugees.** In this the refugees discuss safety related issues and integration in Romania.

2. **Vocational training courses** as a prevention activity

3. **‘Life Skills trainings’** where given at Youth Camps and Youth programs.

4. **Sewing courses for teenagers from a vulnerable community** and developing additional life skills.

5. **Workshops on awareness and prevention** given by Salvation Army

6. **Performing and presenting sketches on the subject of human trafficking** on high schools and the local conference. Students and teachers were involved in preparing the play



Results 2022

pillar 1

	Target	results	remarks
People who have access to a Step Out program	15	36	New beneficiaries joined through outreach in Bucharest and referrals. Since April, the shelter in Oradea offers housing for both victims of human trafficking and refugees
volunteers motivated and involved in activities (Oradea & Bucharest)	20	25	Volunteers are involved in safety net building through spending time together with beneficiaries for bible study, free time activities and parenting activities.
outreach in Oradea	25	0	Because of safety questions for staff and beneficiaries the outreach is delayed a security officer and measures are in place
Outreach in Bucharest	150	62	Total of 62 people was reached through Salvation Army activities. At Christmas, 156 gifts were distributed to women exploited through prostitution
Conferences for capacity building for local staff and others	2	2	Two conferences were organized (May and November). Reaching a total of 250 students and professionals. Topics covered were: 'trauma informed care', 'early identification of human trafficking' and 'prevention of human trafficking among refugees'.
People involved in Vocational Training Course	12	7	An opportunity for vocational training was offered to all the beneficiaries. Not all were ready to start a vocational training course.

Results pillar 2

	Target	results	remarks
Conference conducted on Legal support for local authorities	2	2	New beneficiaries joined through outreach in Bucharest and referrals. Since April, the shelter in Oradea offers housing for both victims of human trafficking and refugees
Participants at conference	80	113	There were 80 participants at the conference “Building a Collaborative Criminal Justice Response to Trafficking Persons in Romania” and 33 at the Multidisciplinary training organized for the Bucharest region.
Conferences conducted on local authorities (refugee project)	1	1	The aim of the conference was to facilitate communication between state institutions and non-governmental organizations, as well as spreading information related to the prevention of human trafficking among Ukrainian citizens.
Participants Refugee project	10	24	24 participants at the conference
Refugees supported	250	1500	IJM offered humanitarian aid with food, transport, bedding, sim cards, etc. Protection officers referred to social/medical services. IJM offered transport and safety measures for refugees to Western Europe.
Referral cases	12	17	Victims that were supported are young women residing in the north and east side of Romania, who were recruited in Romania and trafficked both internally and to other countries of destination.

Results pillar 3

	Target	results	remarks
People targeted for awareness raising and prevention activities			
<i>Oradea</i>	250	320	Sketches developed and presented at highschoools and at the local conference
<i>Bucharest</i>	250	1010	Salvation Army organized 25 workshops on awareness and prevention
<i>Oradea Refugee Project</i>	100	21	prevention activities were launched and continue in 2023
Teenagers involved in Life Skills development			Teenagers from vulnurable communities participate in sewing courses at Betania and develop additional lifeskills.
<i>Oradea</i>	15	6	
<i>Bucharest</i>	0	194	
Caretakers involved in parenting classes	15	15	Volunteers were involved in holding parenting classes for the mothers that are beneficiaries in the project.
Active safety nets	1	1	A safety net is developed by organising activities for women and teenagers.
<i>refugee project</i>	1	1	In this the refugees also discuss safety related issues and integration in Romania.
People involved in Vocational Training Course	25	22	Beneficiaries both from Salvation Army and Betania participated at vocational training courses as a prevention activity.
<i>refugee project</i>	5	9	Refugees participated at sewing courses at Betania to develop new skills towards social reintegration.

Looking into 2023

Evaluation

Next Steps will conduct an evaluation to validate the impact of this project and collaboration. As well as looking into future perspective: “what would Next Steps look like after 2023?”. Because of the lower expenditures (due to the war, covid 19 and other causes) it is possible to extend the project till December '23, this will give time to work out the findings of the evaluation.

Writing

We aim to use the expertise from the Next Steps partners and the network of professionals and professors from local universities in printing a book on the topic of fighting against human trafficking. Such a book could be shared later at conferences and courses as training material for (future) professionals involved in social work, law, or law enforcement.

Develop

We aim to use and develop the Prevention Tools developed in 2022, to reach more people through Raising Awareness, both in offline and online campaigns.

Quality

We aim to help even more victims of human trafficking, women who are exploited through prostitution through referrals. We aim to develop the quality of our assistance and the level of security for both beneficiaries and staff.

Next Steps in the Netherlands

was able to travel to Oradea in February/March and met up with Betania.



has actively worked on fundraising and communication in the Netherlands, such as Fred Foundation, EVA, EOM. IJM Romania was able to meet with police officers and other experts in the Netherlands to discuss the trafficking situation. SA and IJM organised a joint workshop to IJM staff; this strengthened the collaboration of Next Steps.

visited 21 partner NGOs, the police in three regions and nine care coordinators in nine regions. In these visits the work of Next Steps was explained, and collaboration was promoted. Salvation Army got 5 requests for advice from those different partners and attended 6 network meetings. Currently there are 3 Romanian, 2 Hungarian and 1 Bulgarian in the Next Steps caseload.



has the lead role within this collaboration. In Romania and the Netherlands coordination meetings take place. A new coordinator was appointed, she was able to visit Betania in June and December. Betania was supported in the start of the emergency response for Ukrainian refugees.