



Ministry of Security and Justice

Dutch anti-trafficking policy:

*exit programmes for prostitutes,
shelter for victims of human
trafficking and the international
projects to combat human
trafficking and related issues that
are funded by the Netherlands*

The Government of the Netherlands views trafficking in human beings as a modern form of slavery, which deprives the victims of basic human rights. Women and young girls are particularly vulnerable to trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation, but men and boys are being trafficked as well, notably as cheap labour. All forms of trafficking in human beings – be it for the purpose of sexual or labour exploitation or otherwise – must be tackled forcefully, both at the national and the international level. The foremost consideration must be to protect victims and prevent more people from falling prey to traffickers. This calls for a victim-centred approach.

This leaflet covers three specific aspects of Dutch anti-trafficking policy: exit programmes for prostitutes, shelter for victims of human trafficking and the international projects to combat human trafficking and related issues that are funded by the Netherlands.

For more information on these subjects or other aspects of Dutch anti-trafficking policy, please contact the information telephone of the joint ministries:

Postbus 51 Infolijn

Telephone: 0800 – 8051 (from within the Netherlands)
or (+31) 77 – 465 6767 (from outside the Netherlands)
Opening times: Mon-Fri 8 am – 8 pm
Internet: www.rijksoverheid.nl/international

Exit programmes for prostitutes

Exit programmes are intended for prostitutes who want to stop working as a prostitute. The (ex-) prostitutes taking part in an exit programme are assisted in finding other daytime activities, in order to support a clean break with prostitution. Other daytime activities may be paid employment, but also a study or training course, daily activities in a sheltered workshop or volunteer work. The participants will in that case receive a benefit to enable them to pay for their daily necessities.

The exit programme focuses on problems in various areas of life. These problems include debts, the lack of a suitable home (and, as a consequence, the inability to apply for a benefit), psychosocial problems, failing to master the Dutch language, duress and exploitation, addictions, etc. The participants are in many cases confronted with a combination of these factors. A counsellor will provide assistance and help them tackle their problems. This counsellor will render support by determining the bottlenecks in various areas of life, deciding which problems need to be tackled first, and supporting the participant's contacts with welfare agencies.

In 2008 the Dutch Ministry of Justice drew up the 'Exit Programmes for Prostitutes Scheme' (*Regeling Uitstapprogramma's Prostituees*, RUPS). A subsidy of fifteen million euros was made available as an incentive for municipalities and agencies to set up exit programmes for prostitutes who want to be coached into a different job / life. In the end, the Ministry has paid subsidies representing a total sum of ten million Euros to municipalities and agencies. A total of thirteen exit programmes all over the country have been set up or extended with the help of the RUPS scheme. About 800 to 850 prostitutes have participated (or are still participating) in one of these exit programmes. The scheme will expire on 1 July 2011. As from that date, municipalities will be responsible for the financing of the programmes.

An evaluation of the Ministry's RUPS scheme found that practically all projects have appointed counsellors to assist the prostitutes. These counsellors are essential for a successful exit programme. They are the permanent contact persons for the participants. They coordinate the aid to be supplied to the participant. Consequently, the counsellor is the pivot between all welfare agencies that the prostitute will come onto contact with when exiting prostitution. Another finding of the evaluation was that well-functioning supply chain management for this kind of aid is crucial for a successful exit programme, since it depends on the various welfare agencies with which they cooperate.

Shelter for victims of human trafficking

Victims of human trafficking can be housed in different kinds of shelter, including regular facilities – such as women’s shelters – and facilities specifically intended for victims of human trafficking.

Shelter for victims of human trafficking:

In the summer of 2010 a two-year “pilot for special shelters for victims of human trafficking” was started, creating accommodation for 50 women and men, including their children, if any. The pilot – which was set up by the State Secretary for Justice and the State Secretary for Health, Welfare and Sports – provides shelter offered by aid workers with special knowledge of this group of victims. The victims will be given rest, safety and assistance as needed. The pilot differentiates between the sexes, but not between ages or different kinds of exploitation. It has room for 40 female victims and 10 male victims. For the majority of victimised minors other shelter is already available, which will be elaborated on below.

Since the beginning of the pilot, the situation regarding the shelter capacity has improved considerably, but it is still not – quite – sufficient. In March 2011, all 50 places were occupied. It is striking that some victims stay in the shelter facility for a relatively long time. This is due to bottlenecks in the process of moving victims on to other (follow-up) shelters and regular housing. The Task Force on Human Trafficking (*Task Force Aanpak Mensenhandel*) – in cooperation with the Federation for Shelter and Assistance (*Federatie Opvang*) – is looking for solutions to this problem.

Additionally, it appears that a majority of the victims files a report of human trafficking (at least 76 out of 112 victims up to March 2011). This is an important positive discovery, as the pilot is primarily aimed at providing rest and safety for victims. This includes the intention to increase the number of reports filed by victims of human trafficking.

The Research and Documentation Centre of the Ministry of Security and Justice (WODC) is presently evaluating the pilot. The evaluation will focus on the question to what extent the pilot has been sufficiently tailored to the nature of the victims’ problems and to what extent the shelter facilities must differentiate on the basis of age and nature of the exploitation.

Men’s shelters:

In addition to the 10 places for men that have been created within the “pilot for special shelters” mentioned above, there are also 8 places available for male victims of human trafficking within the framework of a separate “pilot for men’s shelters”. These 8 places have been made available in Amsterdam, The Hague, Rotterdam and Utrecht.

Victims of ‘loverboys’ (pimps):

Our country has several reporting centres and community care projects for victims of pimps (the so-called ‘loverboys’) in place, providing specific care for these victims. If there is a reason to do so, the girls will be referred to the Youth Care Agency (*Bureau Jeugdzorg*). The Youth Care Agencies offer programmes intended to teach vulnerable girls to be more assertive and withstand pimps. These programmes are included in the regular youth care. If secure shelter is needed to prevent the minor from backing out of the care or from being forced to back out of it, the juvenile will be eligible for secure youth care.

Youth care does not offer special accommodations for girls who have been victimised by pimps. The secure youth care institutions establish the issues and problems of each individual juvenile and give him/her the treatment that is most suitable for those problems. The same applies to girls who have been victimised by pimps. There is also a special women’s shelter for victims of pimps, i.e. Asja of Fier Fryslân.

Protected reception centres:

Since 1 January 2008 protected reception centres have been available for unaccompanied foreign minors who are or may be a victim of human trafficking. The shelters provide room for approximately 65 minors. This type of shelter is intended to protect juveniles and, consequently, to prevent the unaccompanied foreign minors from disappearing from the shelter and (again) falling prey to exploitation. Efforts are made to improve the juveniles' competences and to prepare them for a future including a return to the country of origin.

Other shelters:

In addition to the accommodations referred to above, the regular women's shelters are also available for victims of human trafficking.

Funding by the Netherlands of international projects to combat human trafficking and related issues reflecting the state of play as of July 2011

This list mentions capacity building and other non-operational projects which are currently being implemented or have been implemented in recent years. All projects mentioned are (were) funded by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Projects within the Netherlands are funded by other Ministries. Operational cooperation is not covered by this overview, although a few examples of the mutually reinforcing effect between operational and non-operational cooperation are mentioned.

Human trafficking is a complex phenomenon that take on many shapes and forms and is closely intertwined with, if not identical to, a number of related concepts such as forced labour, bonded labour and the exploitation of children. For the sake of clarity, this overview is divided in four parts:

1. projects to counter human trafficking in general or with a focus on trafficking for the purpose of sexual exploitation,
2. projects with a focus on countering labour trafficking and bonded labour,
3. projects to counter (the worst forms of) child labour,
4. projects to counter child-sex tourism.

1. *Countering trafficking in human beings*

Technical assistance to Bulgaria

In connection with the trafficking of young Bulgarian women to the Netherlands and other West-European countries, an intensive project for technical assistance to Bulgaria was implemented in 2009 and 2010. The focus of the project was on technical assistance to and training of Bulgarian law enforcement authorities, notably the anti-trafficking unit of the Ministry of Interior. Most of the training was provided by experts from Dutch law enforcement authorities, but Dutch NGOs were also involved. The project included training in running shelters and an information campaign at secondary schools in areas where recruitment activity by traffickers is taking place. A documentary film was made about the story of a former Bulgarian victim as an awareness raising tool. A final conference in Sofia in December 2010, attended by Justice State-Secretary Teeven, marked the end of the project, which can be regarded as highly successful. Building on the good cooperation created by this project, three Joint Investigations Teams were set up with Bulgaria in the beginning of 2011 to investigate specific cases.

National referral mechanism for Bulgaria

La Strada International and CoMensha (the Dutch member of La Strada) carried out a project together with Animus Association (the Bulgarian La Strada member) to develop a national referral mechanism for Bulgaria. The project also involved capacity-building in the field of victim care. The project was approved at the end of 2007. The implementation period ran from the beginning of 2008 till the end of 2010. The national referral mechanism developed in the framework of the project was approved by the Bulgarian National Commission in November 2010, thus achieving the main aim of the project.

Building capacity and promoting multi-stakeholder cooperation at national and district level in Romania

This two year project was planned to run from the beginning of 2008 up to the end of 2009. It focused on capacity building, multi-stakeholder cooperation and improved referral procedures at both the national and the district level in Romania. The national police was the lead agency of the project on the Dutch side. CoMensha, an NGO, was also involved. The project was prolonged for about half a year until mid 2010 to allow it to take into account organizational changes with regard to ANITP, the anti-trafficking agency in Romania.

NGO project in Hungary

The Netherlands Embassy in Budapest funded an 8 month project (August 2010-March 2011) by an NGO named Magyarországi Női Alapítvány (MONA). The title of the project is “developing interdisciplinary cooperation and improving legislation for enhanced victim protection and more effective combating of sexual exploitation”. The project involves, amongst others, training sessions for a variety of stakeholders.

Assisting Nigeria in fighting human trafficking

A first project was started in 2009 and built on the close relationship that was forged with NAPTIP during the joint investigation in 2007, code named “Operation Koolvis”, concerning the trafficking of young Nigerian women to the Netherlands and other European countries. The project ran from the beginning of July 2009 to the end of June 2010. The project consisted of a series of trainings given by a variety of experts from Dutch law enforcement agencies to personnel from NAPTIP and other Nigerian agencies such as the Nigeria Immigration Service. The trainings emphasised the importance of a victim-sensitive and rule-based approach and covered topics such as:

- investigative techniques,
- intake, interview and referral procedures regarding victims,
- uncovering document and identity fraud,
- airport profiling (for instance spotting victims among passengers),
- the gathering of digital evidence,
- asset recovery and seizure.

This sequence of trainings provided by this project was successful in increasing the professional skills of the Nigerian agencies involved in the project. But clearly the problems facing Nigeria remain huge. A follow on project will start in the second half of this year. The new project will consist of more advanced training on some of the same topics as well as new ones such as witness protection. The new project is expected to cover a three-year period. The aim of the project will be to stem the flow of (young) Nigerian women that are being trafficked to Europe for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

Nigeria: victim support in Benin and Lagos provinces

In August 2008 Italy and the Netherlands agreed to support a project by IOM Nigeria in the provinces of Benin and Lagos. The project aimed at improving victim support and shelter facilities in those provinces both through NAPTIP and through the involvement of local NGOs. The full name of the project is “Counter Trafficking Initiative: analysis of the evolution of trafficking in persons, grass root social intervention, building social services and networking capacity and promoting direct assistance.” Norway joined the project at a later stage. The project is expected to be completed by December 2011.

Angola: strengthening civil society to fight human trafficking

This project by IOM/Angola is funded through the Netherlands Embassy in Luanda. The project started in November 2009. The project will run till October 2011. The project is aimed at mobilizing and strengthening local NGOs through training and awareness raising activities. Implementation of the project is on track.

Enhancing the effectiveness of national action plans against human trafficking in Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia

The project was developed by ICMPD together with Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia and fits in a larger international effort to stem human trafficking in the Southern Caucasus under the leadership of the ILO and OSCE. The implementation period ran from the beginning of September 2009 up to the end of August 2010. The project aimed at improving the quality and implementation of national actions plans against human trafficking in those three countries and at developing better institutional structures to support and monitor implementation.

Kazakhstan: setting up a shelter for victims of human trafficking

This IOM project was funded through the Netherlands embassy in Astana. The project started in December 2007 and ran until December 2010. With these funds a women shelter has been established in the north of the country. A hotline that victims can call for help was also set up.

Syria: shelter for trafficking victims

The Netherlands Embassy in Damascus has been contributing to preparations for establishing a shelter for women victim of human trafficking in Damascus, an initiative of the IOM. The shelter was opened in January 2009, the first such shelter in that country. The Embassy has winded down its contribution in the course of 2010.

Peru: citizens oversight

This project has been developed by the Peruvian NGO, Capital Humano y Social Alternativo. The full title of the project is Veeduría ciudadana de la trata de personas, el tráfico ilícito de migrante. The project was started in August 2008 and ran until July 2010 with funding from our Embassy in Lima. The project aimed to create greater awareness of the issues of human trafficking and people smuggling. More specifically it led to the establishment of a system of citizens oversight of government performance in protecting citizens against human trafficking and exploitation. Citizens can also report on cases of human trafficking and exploitation through this system. Expertise built up through the project also contributed to a recent assessment of the implementation of Peruvian legislation on human trafficking and people smuggling.

2. Countering labour trafficking, bonded labour and domestic servitude

Support for Decent Work Agenda of ILO

The Netherlands has provided substantial funding in the period 2006-2010 in support of ILOs Decent Work Agenda. The Dutch contribution has been used to fund a variety of activities, including Decent Work Country Programmes in 10 developing countries. Some of these activities were specifically directed at combating forced labour and child labour, some were directed at broader labour issues. A similar commitment had been made to support the Decent Work Agenda in the period 2011-2014.

European conference on combating labour trafficking (Laborex10)

In the beginning of February 2010 a three-day conference was held in the Netherlands (Kerkrade) gathering over 100 experts from 23 European countries to exchange ideas on how to combat human trafficking for the purpose of labour exploitation more effectively. The conference included practitioners (investigators, prosecutors and labour inspectors) as well as policy makers and representatives from NGOs and academia. The conference was organised by the Social Security Intelligence and Investigation Service (SIOD) of the Netherlands in cooperation with the Romanian National Agency against Trafficking in Persons (ANITP). The event was funded by the Ministry of Social Affairs and Employment. A conference report has been published under the title "Labour Exploitation in Europe."

Croatia: targeting niches in the anti-trafficking efforts with a special focus on labour exploitation

This project was developed by ICMPD (the International Centre for Migration Policy Development) in cooperation with Croatian authorities and funded by the Netherlands. The project ran from the beginning of November 2009 to the end of October 2010. The project involved a series of trainings in fighting human trafficking for the Croatian police, border police, labour inspectors and staff of the public prosecutor. The project also involved research on the extent of labour trafficking in Croatia. The training for labour inspectors and police officers involved in labour issues built on the results of this research. The project proved instrumental in creating greater awareness among Croatian law enforcement authorities and labour inspectors of the issue of labour trafficking. At the final conference of the project in September 2010 all countries from the Western Balkan were represented and this provided a good opportunity for discussing common problems. The possibility of a broader regional follow on

project involving training with regard to the investigation and prosecution of labour trafficking is being considered.

Oman: building government capacity to combat human trafficking and protect foreign domestic workers

This ILO project is funded through our Embassy in Muscat. The project was started in December 2009 and ran till the end of 2010. The main elements of the project were training of government officials, a study on ways to improve monitoring of labour recruitment agencies and exploration of the need for a shelter. The possibility of a follow-up project is being considered, notably concerning the need to establish a shelter.

3. Countering child labour

The Netherlands has been devoting special attention to combating child labour, with emphasis on the worst forms of child labour including child trafficking. In this connection a wide variety of activities have been undertaken including projects in several countries. On 10 and 11 May 2010 the Ministry of Social Affairs (SZW) organised, together with the ILO, “The Hague Global Child Labour Conference 2010. Towards a World without Child Labour. Mapping the road to 2016.” The Minister for Foreign Affairs also spoke at the conference.

The Government of the Netherlands is also in close contact with Dutch employer associations and private companies that operate internationally to impress upon them the need to make sure that their global supply chains are free from either child labour or forced adult labour.

Projects to counter child labour and to support its victims have been initiated by a number of our Embassies. Particularly active in this field is our Embassy in New Delhi, which has been promoting debate and research on the issue of child labour in the region and the related issue of bonded labour for a number of years. Thus the Embassy funded a forum on child labour in the garment sector, a project started in April 2009 that has been prolonged until March 2011. The Embassy had also been funding projects by Indian NGOs in this field. For instance, a project by the Karunalaya Social Service Society on child labour prevention and intervention in north Chennai was started in October 2010 and will run until September 2012. Two centres for shelter and rehabilitation of child labourers (bal ashram and mukti ashram) are being supported for the period April 2010 – April 2012.

4. Countering child-sex tourism

In 2009 and 2010 the Netherlands provided substantial funding in support of a broader ongoing UNICEF programme for technical assistance to Cambodian law enforcement authorities (notably the Anti-Human Trafficking and Juvenile Protection Police) to fight abuse of children as a consequence of child-sex tourism. Various other activities in the field of both prevention and victim care were also part of the project. The Dutch contribution to this broader project was directed at activities in the border provinces with Thailand and Vietnam and in the touristic province of Siem Reap. These included awareness raising at schools, victim care and various training activities as well as support of efforts by the Cambodian authorities to curb child trafficking across the border with Thailand and Vietnam.

In 2008 the Netherlands also made a commitment to Terre des Hommes (the Dutch branch of the organisation) to fund a three year project aimed at providing legal support to victims of child-sex tourism, encouraging them to act as a witness and developing the capacity of local NGOs to pressure law enforcement authorities to take action when needed. Terre des Hommes works together on this project with APLE (Action Pour Les Enfants) and CWCC (Cambodian Women’s Crisis Centre). Implementation is on track.



In 2008 funding was approved for a project by ECPAT Netherlands. Implementation took place in the period April 2009 until December 2010. An important element of the project was to get travel agencies, tour operators and hotel resorts to approve and implement a code of conduct aimed at preventing and discouraging child-sex tourism. The project also aimed at building capacity among local NGOs in Thailand, Cambodia, Philippines, Gambia and the Dominican Republic to help them to wage awareness campaigns and lobby local tourist organizations and hotel resorts to take a more active stance in preventing and signalling child-sex tourism.