

## UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons, especially women and children.

### Call for contribution: Thematic report on innovative and transformative models of social inclusion for victims of trafficking.

#### Submission from Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII

##### Introduction

The Associazione Comunità Papa Giovanni XXIII, (APG23) is an International Catholic NGO, accredited with Special Consultative Status to the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) since 2006.

An Italian catholic priest - Fr. Oreste Benzi, founded the Association in Italy, in the early '60s.

Today, the Association runs 500 welcoming structures all over the world, of which 298 are family homes where orphaned children, mentally and physically disabled, and other marginalised persons found a substitute family. It runs also emergency shelters, open families, houses of fraternity, cooperatives and day-centres, therapeutic communities for drug users, centres for alcoholics and structures under protection where victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation can find protection and care.

The Association is actually present in 40 countries on five continents.

All APG23 activities and initiatives involve direct sharing with the poorest and most vulnerable people, with the intent to alleviate their suffering in the short term but also to remove the causes of marginalisation and injustice.

Its specific mission is to share life directly with the least and work to remove the causes that generate injustice, poverty and marginalisation.

Our experience involves especially victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation.

It was with the desire to empower and give freedom to women, slaves into prostitution, that APG23 started its work in the '80s, through different street units in all regions of Italy.

By meeting women in the streets, we discovered that all of them are slaves and victims of trafficking; forced into prostitution for exploitation or other economic reasons.

APG23 started to welcome them in their family homes, in protected structures, in order to support them, to help them to rebuild themselves and to plan a better future.

During all these years APG23 has implemented a lot of specific projects and initiatives of social inclusion for survivals of prostitution, sexual exploitation and trafficking. In all these projects it is always crucial the recognition of the **dignity of the women** and the necessity to ensure the fulfilment of all their human rights through their integration and also **by addressing the root causes** that prevent their achievement.

APG23 is supporter of the so called "Nordic Model"; a political and cultural approach that claims to defend gender equality rejecting the idea that woman and children, mostly girls, are commodities that can be bought, sold and sexually exploited by men. Addressing the root causes means to stop the demand, punishing the clients that support trafficking and sexual exploitation buying sex on the streets.

In this submission we will present: 1) The need to change a paradigm; 2) The project to learn an artisanal job (learning a job in connection with local infrastructures); 3) A good Practice: Honey and leather goods in Toscana.

##### 1. The need to change a paradigm.

SDG n. 5 of the Agenda 2030 has the purpose to "achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls".

All women we met on the streets are trekked with the promise of a better future. Once they leave their country of origin, they are caught in the trap of trafficking and sexual exploitation. Not only they lose their

hope for a better future but they also are mentally and physically destroyed by outdoor and indoor prostitution.

To help victims of trafficking for sexual exploitation, they must be free and also they have to take part in social inclusion programmes that allow them to rebuild their life.

**Women empowerment** can't be achieved in a culture that allows the violation of the woman's dignity as if she and her body were objects (see "Honeyball resolution" pp. A, B, D, I, K and art. 1).

In our experience girls and women forced into prostitution come from geographical areas where gender inequality and violence are spread at both familiar and social level. Even education is interrupted due to the lack of economic resources, the promise of easy money from exploiters or social media.

Therefore a real social inclusion will be achieved only by changing this kind of culture.

We need a change of paradigm from a culture of machismo to a gender equality society.

Women that come from sub-saharian Africa are not only victims of sexual exploitation but during the journey through Libya they are subjected to gang rapes and tortures.

The first step must be to overcome "**psychological scars**" of these women.

That's why we welcome these women in our reception centres and family homes where they can find parental figures, intercultural mediator and psychotherapy support.

This model of social inclusion is based on the relationship of trust with these women and a chance to rebuild a new future together.

The first step to empower these women starts with the recognition of their inherent dignity.

In our reception, recovery and integration training for social inclusion and autonomous life, we reflect together with victims of trafficking about some "differences indicators" such as:

- time perception,
- salary;
- work environment;
- safety rules.

Women reception in our family-like structures allows them to build trust relationship, that leads them to try and learn a new job and to understand Italian society and culture.

Our principal stakeholders include the educational and psychological centre "La Filigrana" located in Rimini, and transcultural psychological centres such as "Associazione Diversamente" in Bologna and Centre "Fanon" in Torino.

An important step of this social inclusion model is to help these women enter in a net of **social relationships** both with people of same age and group that allow them not to feel rejected or marginalized. One possible way to achieve this goal is to revitalize their religious dimension, by attending religious communities that belong to their country of origin (such as Orthodox and Pentecostal churches).

Another possible chance is to develop their own talents in artistic, musical or sports fields: empowerment and social inclusion were strengthened by collaborating with other cultural and artistic association (i.e. Caritas, Fondazione Migrantes, AGESCI, Accademia di belle Arti, music and theatre schools)

**Education** is another important aspect of social inclusion.

Victims of trafficking in the past believe that they have to find any kind of job, just to end their previous life conditions and earn enough to survive and move on.

In the last five years something has changed: victims of exploitation are younger, they often had to interrupt their education, and they are attracted by new cultural models and "western" professional figures. Therefore more and more women everyday want to keep studying and achieve a proper education to find a better and more suitable job.

In our experience these women mostly attend CPIA (Local Centre for Education – Centro Provinciale Istruzione Adulti) both to learn Italian and to obtain a school certificate. With regard to professional training in Italy there are regional professional training institutions where women can learn and achieve skills for their personal and work development.

These courses (such as CEFAL, ENAIP, FORMART ECIPAR, IAL) are free of charge because they are financed by the social European fund, in collaboration with trade unions and their particular projects for vulnerable women and victims of violence.

## **2. The project to learn an artisanal job (learning a job in connection with local infrastructures)**

Between 2012 and 2018, among 8 Italian Regions, we surveyed a sample of 60 women survived and welcomed into “Case di fuga” (i.e. houses specifically projected for women that escape exploitation) and family homes. This survey showed a change and an evolution of individual development projects. In the past women looked for unqualified jobs (caretakers, janitors, farm workers); but today individual development projects tend to more qualified professions. This is achievable only by the promotion of local excellences and the improvement of professional education quality and opportunities. Therefore, a safe and qualified job plays a key role to improve social inclusion and women empowerment. Some examples of these development projects are:

- honey production in the Lunigiana area in Tuscany;
- beauty products factory in Crema;
- haute couture dresses production in Modena;
- local restaurants all through Friuli and Romagna coasts.

Given that APG23 structures are always looking for close relationships with enterprises and other local job-offering places throughout the territory they are set in - and therefore they keep finding new local jobs opportunities - they help improving the promotion of local excellences.

Another important aspect concerning this issue is the collaboration with trade unions, especially CISL, that is present throughout the territory and helps building development projects for workers – in particular, in women employment (Coordinamento Donne) and migrants employment care (Anolf).

The most popular jobs involve the factory sector (food, crafts, paper, leather, shoes, bags), the commercial sector (sales manager and tourism), catering and care sector.

These are some of our proposals for women’s employment support:

- Increase the period of time required for internships provided by the Regional anti-trafficking projects from 2 up to 6 months;
- Promote new internship models, such as FAMI projects with European Union funds and professional education and specializations/update courses promoting professional experience of retired workers – they could teach secrets and know-how of old jobs and careers.
- Extend to victims of trafficking those incentives provided for the employment of victims of domestic violence in factories and cooperatives.

## **3. A good Practice: Honey and leather goods in Toscana.**

The Cooperativa “Il Pungiglione” located in Massa Carrara - Italy - has the purpose of facilitating employment of disadvantaged persons. In the past, the Cooperativa, together with other cooperatives that work in the field of honey production and distribution, has employed 20 young victims of trafficking. In collaboration with the project funded by Tuscany Region called “Satis”, the Cooperativa has trained 100 girls circa, that were then employed in the catering sector.

2019 will see the start of a new project, the opening of a production plant of leather goods, decorated printed shirts and haute couture dresses in the Florence area. Together with the production plant, there will be some professional training courses, created in collaboration with CISL Firenze, Accademia delle Belle Arti di Firenze and a group of leather goods’ retired artisans. The production plant and the professional



training courses need to be strictly connected in order to guarantee a more successful project. The production plant will initially start thanks to the collaboration between the Cooperativa members and two young victims; although the final target will be the employment of ten of these young women victims of trafficking. This project is funded by Fondazione Cassa di Risparmio di Firenze, a European project specifically meant for religious institutions, and a special fund for 2019 by a private partner, the Fondazione "Il cuore si scioglie" of Unicoop Firenze.

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