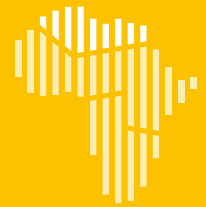


SUCCESS STORY

Rescued from trafficking: two girls' journey from tragedy to recovery



EU Trust Fund for Africa - North of Africa

T05.1590 - Support in the Identification and Assistance of Victims of Human Trafficking - SAVE



EUTF PARTNER:

Comité Contre l'Esclavage Moderne (CEEM).



COUNTRY:
MOROCCO



BUDGET:
EUR 0.6M



From **02/2021**
to **02/2024**

Objective of the project

Victims of human trafficking for labour exploitation in Morocco are identified and supported.

Key successes

- > 140 individual aids have been awarded to victims of human trafficking and 7 hosting centres have been financed.
- > 5 partner civil society organisations have been trained to provide specialised support to victims of human trafficking and assisted in opening over 10 legal cases (civil, criminal, child protection).
- > 2,645 people have been sensitised by 65 interventions in 53 Moroccan towns and villages.

The story of transforming lives

Kesia and Fatima¹, two girls bound by a tragic childhood, were supported by two organisations that not only helped them endure the horrors of their past but also paved the way for their survival and recovery.

Kesia, a courageous young girl from the Democratic Republic of Congo, survived a brutal attack on her home, where her father was killed. Fleeing with her mother's encouragement, she joined a group of street children and later trusted smugglers to get her irregularly to Europe. Instead, she became a victim of trafficking, was forced into labour and abuse, and became pregnant. After escaping, she received critical support from a women's group which referred her to the Moroccan association Droits et Justice. They helped her move to Rabat, provided her protection and essential support during her pregnancy. Kesia is now safe in the USA with her two kids. *"Kesia was resettled in the USA, and we were in contact with her until the final days before her departure. A few weeks after her arrival, the organization handling her case contacted us to request our support for the administrative follow-up of her two babies' files",* says a representative from Droit et Justice association.

Fatima's story began when she was 11 years old, living in a small village near Casablanca. Everything was fine until her family asked her to spend the summer with her teacher. It was far from home, and she didn't



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want to go, but her teacher's promises of care and gold jewellery convinced her parents. *"Once at her house, I understood the purpose of my presence: to do the cleaning and take care of the small errands nearby! This is how my suffering began and my destiny as a little maid continued from one house to another. I gradually detached myself from my family and my former life, but there is one thing I never managed to accept: the permanent loss of my right to education..."*. The exploitation lasted for years during which she endured all forms of violence and abuse, which escalated from one employer to the next, until she found a compassionate woman who addressed her to the National Institute for Solidarity with Women in Distress (INSAF), which alerted the police to intervene and rescue her. Fatima now lives happily in Casablanca in an apartment with a friend and works as a hairdresser-aesthetician.



How did the EUTF help?

Identification and support of victims. A steadfast support for partner CSOs was provided to assist in the identification of victims and potential victims. These CSOs also received financial backing to establish and operate shelters and centres to assist victims. Once identified, victims of trafficking can therefore benefit from integrated support and material assistance through the network of partner organisations.

Legal support for victims. Partner CSOs have received ongoing guidance from the project through the complexities of legal procedures, to provide a specialised support to victims from filing complaints to building criminal cases. Additionally, a network of specialized lawyers in human trafficking has been established to support these partners.

Inter-partner dialogue. The CCEM and its partners have worked to strengthen collaborations between government institutions, CSOs, and international organizations, both in Morocco and within a broader regional framework. Study visits among CSOs facilitated the exchange of insights into each other's local intervention contexts and the sharing of best practices and knowledge.

Keys to Success

A comprehensive, multi-stakeholder, and victim-centered approach. SAVE was inspired by the “4 P” approach promoted by the EU, which recommends combating trafficking through Prevention, Protection, Prosecution, and Partnerships. Human trafficking is a complex phenomenon, the fight against which requires close partnerships among various actors to provide a judicial response while protecting victims. A victim-centered approach entails coordinating the efforts of all stakeholders to prioritise the rights, security, and individual aspirations of the victim.

A good mix of experienced partner associations. Since their inception, the partner associations of SAVE have developed numerous field practices to effectively support the vulnerable groups they target. Committed to providing lasting solutions for people's lives and adapting to global and Moroccan societal changes, the partners have innovated or strengthened practices, which provide solutions at various stages of the fight against trafficking.

1. Real names replaced with pseudonyms to protect privacy.

Disclaimer

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The research for this success story was conducted between February 2024 and August 2024, based on documents reviews, interviews, and email correspondence, and presents the situation at that moment.

Awareness raising on human trafficking. Raising awareness has been a central focus of the project, highlighting human trafficking as a distinct and critical issue in the discussions. A range of initiatives has been implemented to educate the public, stakeholders, and policymakers about the complexities and realities of human trafficking, aiming to shed light on the issue and foster a deeper understanding.

Building on Success

Expanding CSOs' expertise and capacity to support foreign victims. Victims of foreign nationality were mainly assisted by associations specialising in migrant rights. By the end of the project, all partner associations supported non-Moroccan individuals identified as victims or at risk of trafficking. Broadening their expertise and adapting their services to support a diverse range of individuals beyond the traditional focus will enhance the effectiveness of their support and the overall impact.

Strengthening collaboration between field actors. Equipping civil society, like in SAVE, is only the first step towards a dynamic of public service delegation to associations, which, due to their proximity to local communities, are on the front lines of access to rights and the restoration of individuals' dignity. Fostering deeper collaboration between field actors and Moroccan state services will enhance the effectiveness of public service delivery and support for trafficking victims.

Integrating legal standards. Applying the legal definitions of trafficking from Moroccan legislation ensures that support systems are legally informed. This approach will improve the accuracy of victim identification, enhance support services, and facilitate more effective prosecution of trafficking perpetrators. Although frontline actors involved in identifying potential victims of trafficking may not be legal professionals, integrating the legal definition of trafficking into their procedures is crucial for accurately recognizing cases.



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