

From Exploitation to Fair Employment

Report on the organisation of employment services to victims of
trafficking in Finland



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Contents

1. Introduction	8
1.1. Research questions, data and methodology	10
1.1. Central terminology	10
Challenges and opportunities for the employment of trafficking victims	14
2. Structural challenges	15
2.1. The structural employment challenges faced by victims based on the results of the questionnaire	15
2.2. Awareness of employment service providers on human trafficking	17
2.3. Waiting period	22
2.4. Access to rehabilitation services and flexibility of services	24
2.5. Lack of time in services	27
2.6. Residence permits	30
3. Individual challenges	34
3.1. Individual challenges of trafficking victims according to the questionnaire results	35
3.2. Language skills, education and training	38
3.3. Effects of exploitation and violence	44
3.4. Women and people with families	46
3.5. Example cases: referring trafficking victims to services based on their needs	48
4. Opportunities and practices for employing trafficking victims	54
4.1. Interacting with victims at employment services	55
4.2. Promoting employment in practice	58
4.3. Opportunities of the intermediate labour market	63
4.3.1. Rehabilitative work activities as a service for people with partial work ability	63
4.3.2. Work try-out as a tool for career planning	66
4.3.3. Making use of pay subsidies and job coaches	66
4.3.4. Social enterprises and the role of companies	69
4.4. Collaboration	75

5. Conclusions	78
6. Recommendations	84
References	92

1. Introduction

Hundreds of migrant victims of human trafficking or labour exploitation are identified in Finland each year. Human trafficking is a serious crime that violates human rights and personal liberty and integrity. The consequences of exploitation and its effects on an individuals' capacity and work ability vary. Many victims of trafficking wish to stay in Finland and find a path to fair employment in which the statutory terms of employment are fulfilled, and they receive an appropriate salary to provide for themselves and their family. This path is different for each person and because of that, it is important to consider their individual circumstances. Based on international agreements Finland must offer trafficking victims protection and assistance and therefore, in the long run, also improve their work ability and integration into the Finnish society.

Little is known, however, about issues which relate to employment of victims of trafficking and exploitation. The topic has not been studied in Finland and is quite novel also internationally – in most countries less attention has been paid to employment and long-term support needs in comparison to the trafficking victims' identification process and initial support (e.g. McCarthy 2018, 105, 120; Shigekane 2007, 114–115; Surtees 2013). This report is an English version of the original Finnish study that examined the challenges of the organisation of employment services to migrant victims of trafficking in Finland. The English version is shorter than the Finnish report, and only the empirical part of that study has been translated. The report has been written in cooperation by HEU-NI and the National Assistance System for Victims of Trafficking as part of the IKUT-project.

The National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking is an authority tasked with helping trafficking victims in Finland. It offers services for potential victims, their underage children as well as people assisting with the investigation. The Assistance System is also the national centre of knowledge for assisting trafficking victims in Finland, providing consultation and training. The IKUT-project run by the Assistance System focuses on building the employability skills and working life competence of victims of human trafficking in Finland through training modules and direct support. Furthermore, the project aims to increase the awareness of the private sector on human trafficking and to facilitate the private sector's anti-trafficking work. The project is funded by the European Social Fund.

1.1. Research questions, data and methodology

The research questions of the study at hand are the following:

1. What kind of challenges or structural deficiencies related to employment do migrant victims of trafficking face in Finland at the moment?
2. What kind of actions or services would be of use to migrant victims of trafficking to support their employment?

The full Finnish version of the report includes a literature and legislative review which was conducted by the National Assistance System. This section has been omitted from the English version, which includes the empirical findings of the study.

HEUNI was in charge of the collection and analysis of empirical data which was collected 1) via an online questionnaire targeting persons working in employment and social services and NGOs who have assisted and/or encountered victims of trafficking and exploitation in their line of work, and 2) via semi-structured expert interviews which were conducted to get more insights into concrete challenges and solutions related to victims' access to employment from practitioners from the employment, social and victim support services.

50 persons responded to the online questionnaire and 10 interviews with 11 interviewees in total were conducted. The collected data was anonymised and treated confidentially by researchers at HEUNI, and the staff of National Assistance System was not given access to it. This was also communicated to the research participants.

The introduction, conclusions and recommendations have been created in collaboration by HEUNI and the National Assistance System.

1.2. Central terminology

Human trafficking refers to severe exploitation of a person, usually for economic gain. The exploitation of a person may be classified as human trafficking if it includes restriction of a persons' freedom, use of force, threats, debt bondage, misleading, false promises or they have been psychologically pressured. The victim may have been exploited for forced labour, sexual exploitation, forced marriage, forced begging, forced criminal activity or for organ removal.

Labour exploitation refers to cases where the person is subjected to poor terms of employment, is working long hours with wages below the national limits (underpayment) and in unsafe working conditions and has little choice or ability to change their situation.

Forced labour refers to any work or service in which a person is required to work under threat of punishment. In Finland, forced labour is one of the forms of exploitation in the criminal offence of human trafficking.

Migrant workers refer to both non-EU migrants (including asylum seekers and refugees) and EU citizens who work outside their country of origin.

The National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking has been operating in Finland since 2006. The Assistance System operates under Joutseno Reception Centre, a part of the Finnish Immigration Service. The Assistance System provides assistance to victims of trafficking and maintains the national website humantrafficking.fi and a 24/7 helpline at +358 2954 63 177.

Kela refers to a Finnish government agency in charge of settling benefits under national social security programs.

TE Office or Employment and Economic Development Office, refers to the Finnish state authority that organises and produces employment and economic development services. There are 15 regional TE Offices in Finland.

Cross-sectoral joint service promoting employment (TYP service) is a one-stop-shop of a type joint service model for jobseekers who have been unemployed for a long time. It is operated by the TE Office, the municipality and Kela, who work together to prepare a cross-sectoral employment plan with the client and figuring out the most suitable unemployment services for them

Local government pilots on employment started 1 March 2021 and are under way until 30 June 2023. During these trials some job seeking customers of the TE Office are being transferred to their municipalities which will provide them the unemployment services previously administered by the TE Office.¹

Waiting period (or in legislation, unpaid time period) means that the jobseeker is not entitled to the unemployment benefit for a certain period varying from 15 to 90 days. It might be caused by "acting in an improper manner in terms of labour policy", for example resigning without a valid reason, refusing a job offer or discontinuing to participate in the services.²

¹ <https://www.te-palvelut.fi/en/information/use-te-services/local-government-trials>
Accessed 26 April 2022.

² <https://www.te-palvelut.fi/jobseekers/if-unemployed/unemployment-security/mandatory-period>
Accessed 26 April 2022.

³ <https://www.te-palvelut.fi/en/information/use-te-services/local-government-trials>
Accessed 26 April 2022.

⁴ <https://www.te-palvelut.fi/en/jobseekers/support-finding-job/disability-illness>
Accessed 26 April 2022.

Unemployment benefit is paid to unemployed jobseeker (under certain conditions) either by Kela or unemployment insurance fund.

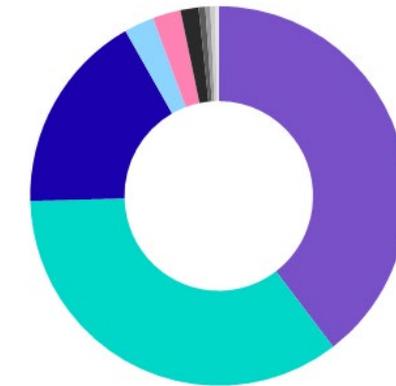
TE Office services that promote employment (include job search training and career coaching, work and training trials, labour market training, independent study supported by unemployment benefit, an immigrant's independent study supported by a benefit and rehabilitative work.³

Rehabilitation can be provided by various service providers if a jobseeker has special needs caused by a disability or illness. The institutions responsible for legally mandated occupational rehabilitation are traffic and accident insurance institutions, work pension companies and the Social Insurance Institution of Finland.⁴

1.3. Setting the scene: Finnish context and trafficking trends

In the past two decades, the legislation concerning human trafficking as well as the identification of victims and the realization of criminal liability have progressed in Finland (Yhdenvertaisuusvaltuutettu 2018, 78). An increasing number of victims have been identified each year, and by 2020, the National Assistance System had more than 900 potential victims of human trafficking as their clients, which is an all-time record (Ihmiskaupan uhrien auttamisjärjestelmä 2021, 10). In 2020, the main NGOs working in the field – Victim Support Finland, Pro-tukipiste, the Finnish Refugee Advice Centre and MONIKA Multicultural Women's Association Finland – identified 120 victims of human trafficking in total, of which 63 % were also sought admittance to the National Assistance System (Roth & Luhtasaari 2021, 19).

Many forms of human trafficking are identified in Finland, including human trafficking for forced labour, sexual exploitation (including forced prostitution and exploitation in the creation of pornographic material), forced marriage, exploitation in criminal activity and begging, organ trade and, as a more recent phenomenon, exploitation related through benefit fraud (e.g. Roth & Luhtasaari 2021, 18–19; Ihmiskaupan uhrien auttamisjärjestelmä 2021, 7–10). Drawing the line between different forms of exploitation may be challenging, as the characteristics of different forms may overlap.



GRAPH 1. Forms of human trafficking experienced by clients of the National Assistance System, January 2021. N=704.

Most victims identified in Finland have experienced trafficking for forced labour or sexual exploitation. In contrast to most European countries, more victims of trafficking for forced labour than for sexual exploitation are identified in Finland (Roth & Luhtasaari 2021, 18; Koskenoja et al. 2018, 37). Most of the victims are migrants, and a slight majority of the victims identified by the National Assistance System and the main NGOs working in the field are either girls or women (Ihmiskaupan uhrien auttamisjärjestelmä 2021; Neliapilajärjestöt 2020).

Challenges and opportunities for the employment of trafficking victims

This part discusses the empirical results of the report based on the survey and expert interviews conducted in 2021.

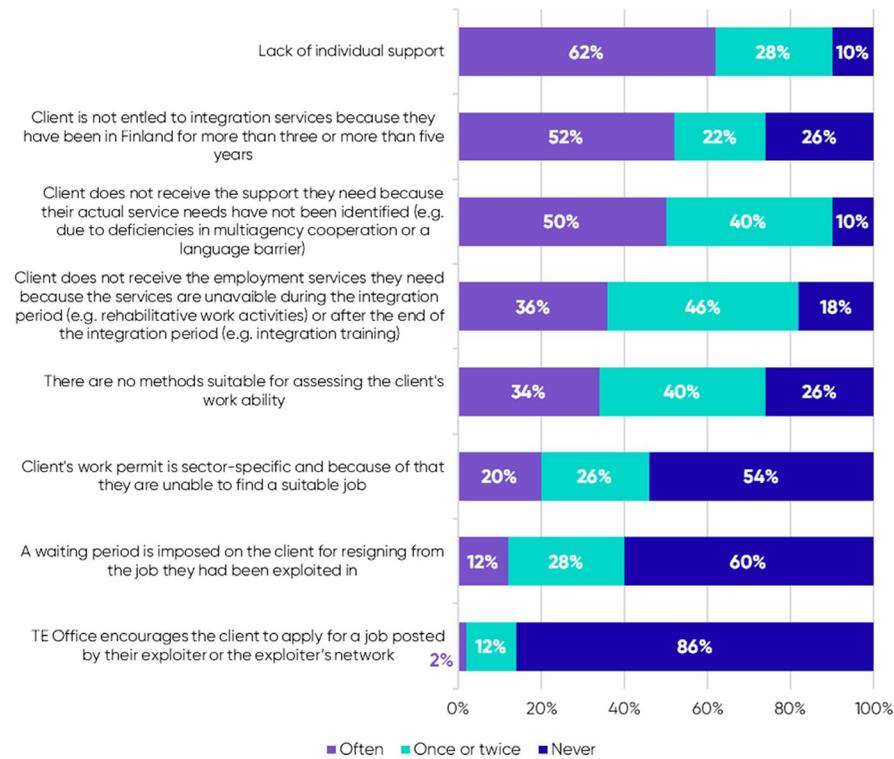
2. Structural challenges

Structural challenges associated with the employment of victims of trafficking and labour exploitation are discussed in this section. Based on previous literature, expert interviews, and the responses to the questionnaire, it is clear that a variety of structural aspects limit the employment opportunities of victims of trafficking and exploitation in Finland. The main issues are that the Finnish employment service system is too rigid to address the complex situations and individual challenges that trafficked persons and other people in vulnerable situations face. There is also still a lack of awareness on human trafficking and its consequences among employment services staff.

2.1. The structural employment challenges faced by victims based on the results of the questionnaire

The questionnaire mapped out different structural employment challenges that experts have identified regarding victims of trafficking or labour exploitation as well as issues that hinder their access to employment. A total of 50 persons responded to the survey, most of whom worked in employment and social services.

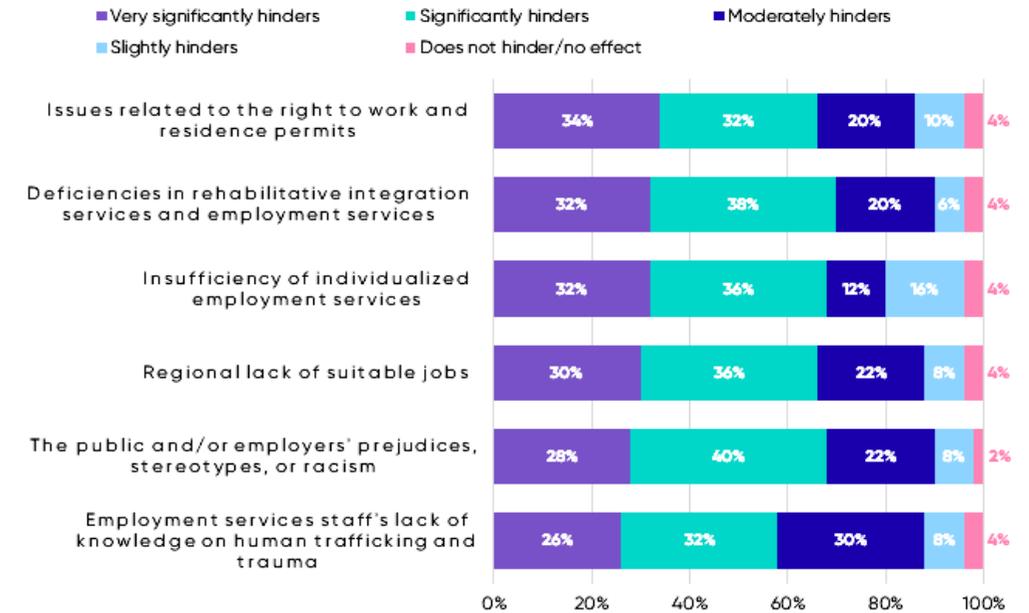
GRAPH 2. Structural challenges identified by respondents in the employment of victims of trafficking or labour exploitation. N=50.



⁵ The Employment and Economic Development Office, or the TE Office, is a Finnish state authority that organises and produces employment and economic development services. There are 15 regional TE Offices in Finland with a total of about 3,000 professional employees. <https://www.te-palvelut.fi/te-to-imistot-tyonantajana> Accessed 26 April 2022.

The most common structural challenge encountered by the respondents was the lack of individual support. Of the respondents, 62 per cent had encountered this issue more than once or twice. A total of 52 per cent had also encountered situations more than once or twice where the exploited worker was no longer entitled to integration services since they had been in Finland for more than three or more than five years. Half of the respondents had also encountered situations more than once or twice where the client could not receive the support they needed because their actual service needs had not been identified due to deficiencies in multi-agency cooperation or due to a language barrier. A few of the respondents reported that the TE Office⁵ had encouraged their client to apply for a job posted by their exploiter or the exploiter's network. Of the respondents, 12 per cent reported encountering this situation once or twice and only two per cent reported encountering it more often.

GRAPH 3. To what extent do the following structural issues affect the employment of victims of exploitation or trafficking? N=50.



A total of 70 per cent of the respondents felt that deficiencies in rehabilitative integration services and employment services hinder trafficked persons' opportunities to find employment significantly (38%) or very significantly (32%). Most respondents (68%) felt that prejudices of the public and/or employers, stereotypes, and racism in particular significantly (40%) or very significantly (28%) hinder victims' opportunities to find employment. Very few respondents felt that these aspects had no effect on the employment opportunities of victims.

The insufficiency of individualized employment services was also seen to hinder victims' opportunities to find work significantly (36%) or very significantly (32%). In addition, 66 per cent of the respondents felt that issues related to the right to work, and residence permits very significantly (34%) or significantly (32%) hinder victims' opportunities to find work. A regional lack of suitable jobs was also seen to hinder finding employment significantly (36%) or very significantly (30%).

2.2. Awareness of employment service providers on human trafficking

The interviewed representatives of employment and social services reported that, generally, the level of knowledge and understanding on human trafficking in employment services is too low. The phenomenon is hard to recognise since there is not enough information available on this or people are not sufficiently aware of it:

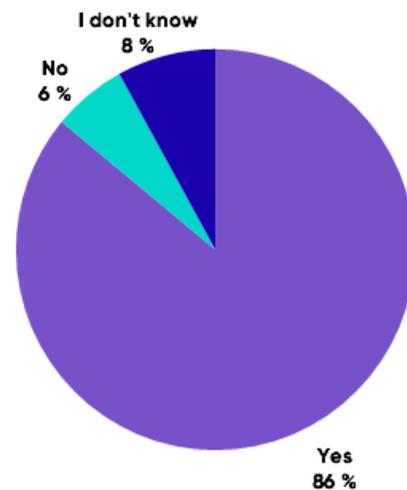
That's the issue here. They [the trafficking victims] are not identified and [they] are not paid very much attention to currently. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 9)

Parties providing support to victims also reported that employment and social services staff lack knowledge on human trafficking, although the understanding on human trafficking among professionals has increased as the general awareness on it has increased due to newspaper articles touching on the subject, for example. A representative of one organisation providing support to victims did note that not knowing enough about human trafficking is understandable if you have never received any training on it:

How could you be expected to consider it [human trafficking] if there's no information or training available on it? (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 2)

On the other hand, as many as 86 per cent of the respondents had encountered a person in their work who they knew to be a victim of trafficking or labour exploitation. This is a significant number and indicates the high level of specialisation of the respondents, considering the rather small annual number of confirmed trafficking victims included in statistics (see section 1.3).

GRAPH 4. Have you encountered a victim of trafficking or exploitation in your work? N=50.



In contrast, only six per cent of the respondents had never encountered a victim of trafficking or exploitation in their work, and eight per cent did not know whether they had encountered a victim or not.

According to the respondents, confirmed victims had been identified in different ways. In some cases, the client had talked about their experience or had otherwise indicated that they were a victim. One respondent stated that the issue might not be discussed during the short meeting unless the client brought it up or the expert asked about it:

Our appointments are 1.5 hours, so if the client does not bring up human trafficking, it's easy to forget to talk about it. In my opinion, we shouldn't think that asking about it is insensitive; it should be a part of our regular set of questions if there's any reason to suspect it. But is 1.5 hours enough time to arouse suspicions? Everyone working directly with clients should have training on this! (A questionnaire respondent)

Information on a client being a victim of trafficking was also received from other authorities, reception centres, the National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking ('Assistance System') and from Victim Support Finland within the limits of the protection of privacy and confidentiality obligations. The information is considered sensitive and, by default, not public information. If a person who has been identified as a trafficking victim registers for the services of the TE Office, the information on the person being a victim is not necessarily conveyed to the TE Office, unless the person themselves or another party assisting them brings up the matter.

Determining that a person is a trafficking victim and sharing this information with different service providers is not always a simple issue. For example, trafficking victims must submit a written statement on their situation to the TE Office to avoid being subjected to the waiting period imposed when applying for unemployment benefit after resigning (see section 2.3). One of the interviewees providing support to victims considered this problematic:

But the biggest [problem] is the thing with the TE Office. I wish there was a system for it. Like, a client could give the Assistance System or some other party the authorisation to give the TE Office the information they need. So that they would not need to include that sort of sensitive information on some general form. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 1)

According to an employment and social services representative, if the information on a client's previous experience with exploitation was available to the employment services, the staff could better consider the overall situation of the client and provide them with specialised support services. Most interviewees reported that a client being a victim of trafficking or exploitation usually becomes apparent when they recount their previous work history. Clients do not always directly state that they are victims of exploitation, but the employees find parts of their stories indicative of exploitation. This means it is possible that a victim is only identified for the first time when they have already become a TE Office client. It should be noted that not everyone who has experienced exploitation see themselves as a victim and that some people do not want to talk about their experience, because they see it as stigmatising (see, e.g., Viuhko & Jokinen 2021, pp. 136–137; Rijken 2019; Brunovskis & Surtees 2007; Viuhko, 2019).

Even if a person is identified as a victim of human trafficking, there might not be sufficient competence to refer the person to the services suited to them. An interviewed representative of employment and social services called for increasing awareness on the services available. An expert providing support to the victims highlighted that in employment and social services, human trafficking may be seen as too difficult a matter. This may lead to staff not offering help or not referring a client because they think that the (special) services required by the client are do not exist. Similar observations have been made in studies on domestic violence, the results of which often indicate that healthcare professionals do not refer victims of domestic violence to support services because they think that there are no organisations or services to refer them to, because addressing the issue is not part of their job, because they think that domestic violence is a private issue, or because they fear that talking about it will traumatise the client (Husso et al. 2012; Virkki et al. 2011).

Even [municipal] staff somehow do not feel comfortable dealing with human trafficking or victims of it and they see it as a difficult issue. In principle, helping those people could be seen to fall within the scope of just basic social work, you just have to pay a bit more attention to their special needs. But then, this is seen as a high-level issue and difficult. And sometimes it happens that the help is not even offered because people think that the person needs some super specialised help. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 2)

According to the experts interviewed, supporting a victim of trafficking is not necessarily any different from supporting any other client, even though some special needs do need to be considered. For example, in some cases, the victims' safety may be at risk, in which case it is important that their course schedule and other information is not disclosed to any third parties. In such cases, it is important that the teachers of courses, for example, have some information on the situation. Preventing re-victimisation and any previous trauma the person has suffered should also be taken into account in the work.

Relatively speaking, human trafficking largely a hidden form of criminality, which is why employment services staff do not encounter it that often. Even if they have received training on human trafficking, they might not remember the things they have learned when they actually find themselves in that situation.

(...) since it's not something that we see even every week; it's just individual cases, so we let it slip from our memory and focus on the things that we encounter daily. I'm sure there are services for these victims as well, but do we have the competence to refer them to those services – us, as in people like me, regular employees (...) Everything looks great in theory, but how the referring is done in practice – I think that's the real issue. I'm sure there are some services and that there should be more of them, but most of all there should be more information on them, and we should be able to refer people to those services more actively. I think that's the core issue, but that's just the impression I've got. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 7)

In addition to the cases being few and far between, what causes issues is that the required competence is often found only in individuals instead of all operators having a sufficient understanding of the phenomenon:

It's very dependent on individuals, there's those few people who have that ability to sense these things and identify them. Who can read between the lines and come to a conclusion? But the know-how in the field – who do you refer these victims to and how to learn more about the situation the client is in – that's where the deficiencies are. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 8)

Victims' access to services is unequal, if the referral depends on the employee the victim's case is assigned to. Similar challenges have been observed, for example, in connection with the competence of pre-trial investigators (Jokinen et al. 2011; Ylinen et al. 2020; Pekkarinen et al. 2021), i.e., that the required competence is not structurally ensured.

Knowledge and awareness can be increased by providing practitioners with training, but according to the interviewees, the training provided so far has been sporadic. In addition, staff turnover means that organisations may not retain the competence despite the training offered. In particular, victims' support organisations have been providing training, but current resources are not sufficient for organising training that is systematic and comprehensive.

2.3. Waiting period

Parties providing support to victims reported a number of challenges that their clients face related to using the services of the TE Office and applying for unemployment benefit. Victims of trafficking or labour exploitation that register for the TE Office services have usually resigned on their own initiative. This means they may temporarily lose their right to receive unemployment benefit, i.e., they become subject to a mandatory waiting period, since in the context of the system, resigning is treated as an action that may be improper from the point of view of labour policy.

According to the Unemployment Security Act (288/2021 chapter 2a, section 1), resigning without a valid reason results in a waiting period of 90 days, and if an employee causes their employment to be terminated due to their own improper conduct, the employee is subject to a 60-day waiting period during which they cannot receive unemployment benefits. Although valid reasons for resigning include the grounds laid down in the Employment Contracts Act – such as the employer endangering occupational safety, or not paying salaries or wages – a waiting period has been imposed on some victims of trafficking and exploitation according to the interviewees providing support to victims. This may partly be due to the person not wanting to specify the sensitive reasons for their resignation when applying for unemployment benefit, but to some degree, it is also due to a lack of awareness on the TE Office's part and their very strict interpretation of the law:

If you tell the employment services that there's an on-going police investigation related to this, then a waiting period might not be imposed for resigning. But of course, not everyone is comfortable including that on some TE Office form. There was this one client, who had arrived to work in Finland and then had resigned like a year ago. That person got a waiting period of six months, because they had no educational background nor any documents that would have proved that their employment had ended. We're trying to get their case reviewed, but that's always the issue with these things – if you quit a job where you're exploited, they won't give you a certificate of employment or anything. And every time it's the same struggle with the TE Office. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 1)

As this interviewee said, one challenge faced by the victims in terms of re-employment is that victims who get away from exploitative employers are not able to present a certificate of employment from their previous job. According to an interviewed employment and social services representative, to avoid being imposed a waiting period, the client must provide proof to the TE Office within two weeks that they have not acted in an improper manner when terminating their employment and that the termination was due to their employer's inappropriate or illegal conduct. The unemployment security experts at the TE Office require a written statement from the client on the reasons why they have resigned, and any possible appendices that could provide further information on the situation:

When a client submits their statement on their resignation, we can deem that the person has not acted improperly and has not caused the termination of their employment with their own conduct. There must be some indication on the employer behaving inappropriately or criminally for us to deem and prove that the client has not quit their job on a whim and that there's something more pressing behind their decision. And this statement must be made in Finnish and be submitted within two weeks, and when a statement is drafted, it should include the information that a criminal investigation is underway in the case and that it's being processed. There should be some appendices as proof of that so that [the TE Office] can judge the overall situation and deem that the client has not acted in a improper manner and that there are clearly circumstances that make the client's resignation justified. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 8)

As this example indicates, the system is very rigid in situations where a worker resigns due to the inappropriate or even criminal conduct of the employer. To avoid a waiting period, victims of trafficking or labour exploitation must submit potentially extremely sensitive statements, including police reports, on their situation within the two-week deadline to the unemployment security committee. As reported in an extensive article published in Helsingin Sanomat on 24 May 2021 and in previous research (Jokinen et al. 2011; Jokinen 2012; Jokinen & Ollus 2014), cases related to labour exploitation have been investigated by the police as wage-related disputes, which means that no official police report is registered in the system; instead, only a ‘miscellaneous report’ is entered. This means that the victims do not necessarily have any documents to append to the statement they must submit to the unemployment security committee, particularly if the employer responsible for the labour exploitation has not provided any written documents at the end of the employment. However, one interviewed representative of employment and social services noted that in most cases, the TE Office trusts their clients and that in such situations a statement from a lawyer, the National Assistance System, or a social service employee can be submitted as proof.

⁶ Kela is a Finnish government agency in charge of settling benefits under national social security programs.

During the process, the client will not receive unemployment benefit; instead, they must apply for social assistance from the Finnish Social Insurance Institution (Kela)⁶ or supplementary social assistance from the social services of their municipality. Cases take from two to four weeks to process. If the employment is deemed to have been terminated due to reasons independent of the client, unemployment benefit will be paid retroactively from the date on which the client registered for the TE Office services. (Memorandum 23 October 2020.) It is clear that a bureaucratic system such as this requires navigating between the services of different authorities and completing a variety of forms, and this can be difficult for a migrant who does not speak Finnish. Thus, the need for low-threshold guidance and advice services is high.

2.4 Access to rehabilitation services and flexibility of services

Another key structural challenge that many of the interviewees providing support to victims had encountered is related to whether the victims of trafficking have access to integration services. According to the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010, section 12), the first integration plan must be drawn up no later than three years after the person receives their first residence permit or their right of residence is registered. In special cases, this period can be extended by two years at most.

The problem is that most victims of trafficking register with the TE Office only after these time limits of three or five years have passed. Thus, there is a risk that the person is no longer deemed eligible for integration services and the person is interpreted to be integrated into the Finnish society via other means. All the interviewees providing support to victims said that these time limits are a problem in the case of trafficking or labour exploitation victims:

And there are cases, that the time limit for integration services have may have passed, and they seem to not understand that even if a person has been in Finland for five years now – and there have been cases where they’ve been here for as many as seven years before their situation comes out – they may be, in terms of their skills for functioning in the Finnish society, on the same line as those who have just arrived here. And, there’s all that psychological baggage (...) that the situation has caused them, the exploitation. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 2)

It is clear that, for example, a victim of labour exploitation who has worked long days with little pay for many years and whose comings and goings have been controlled, has not had an opportunity to integrate into the Finnish society within the meaning of the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration in practice. According to the experts interviewed, a person can be offered for example language courses even if they have exceeded the time limit for integration services, but they are not eligible for having an integration plan drafted.

According to the interviewees providing support to victims, it should be possible to consider drafting an integration plan and granting access to integration services if the person is a trafficking or labour exploitation victim and thus it cannot be assumed that the person has integrated into the society or learned any Finnish within the time limits. The representatives of employment and social services also expressed that they feel that the Act should be interpreted in a more flexible manner in certain situations, for example, in cases where the integration process should be postponed:

If the Act could be made a bit less strict so that those people who need the plan and who are able to start the integration process would get the plan. But then those who for some reason cannot start the integration process yet – for health reasons, social reasons or any other reason – (...) that the plan could be left undrafted for those people, for the time being. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 6)

According to legislation, immigrants are obligated to follow their integration plan and to take Finnish or Swedish language courses according to the plan as well as to engage in the other activities and seek the services specified in their plan. If a person refuses to fulfil this obligation without a viable reason, their right to unemployment benefit may be restricted or the amount of social assistance granted to them can be lowered. (Act 1386/2010, section 17.) According to the interviewees, it may be difficult for victims of trafficking and exploitation to follow their individual plan due to, for example, mental trauma resulting from the exploitation. Therefore, the plan should include goals that the person in question can meet. In addition, individual adjustments may be required.

According to the interviewees, a person who is not yet ready to undergo the integration process could start by participating in a civic orientation group with a less strict schedule and according to their own mental resources. According to one interviewed employment and social services representative, an option along these lines has been talked about for some time, but the current Integration Act does not allow its implementation. Another interviewee noted that there are no rehabilitative integration services (or integrative rehabilitation services) in the current special support service selection. In general, undergoing the integration process does not necessarily give a person enough competence to act independently, as one interviewee pointed out:

[After the process] people can be just pushed out the door with a 'you're on your own now'. It is now your obligation to know everything and to independently find out everything you don't know. (...) People are thrust into self-reliance and responsibilities. The integration training aims at teaching them and coaching them, but I see it in practice that it's not really happening as it should. I don't mean that the integration services aren't... I'm sure their work is excellent, but the human mind and human psyche just need a certain amount of time; I have a client who's been in Finland for 20 years and still struggles with a lot of things. (...) But people are different. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 7)

In referring people to integration services, there seems to be some situation- or operator-specific flexibility. One of the interviewed employment and social services employee said that they had referred a client whose integration service time limit had already passed to integration services and to activity-based training. The client had experienced mental trauma, but with the services and training, they were able to “engage in some-

thing meaningful within the limits of their mental resources, work ability, and learning capacity and to get a foot in the door in terms of joining our society.”

In an ideal situation, the integration process would be flexible and would allow for simultaneously working and participating in training, and the figurative walls of the silos between different functions could be lowered. As another interviewed representative of employment and training services stated, this could promote networking for migrants and their access to the labour market:

(...) We should genuinely think about the overall process of integration. If I moved to another town or to a new country, what would be the things that I would need to establish everyday routines and begin living a good life in the new place. In addition, we should have those low-threshold places. Or if a client has a family, we should help the entire family get a foothold in the Finnish society. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 8)

Migrants identified as victims of human trafficking – for example, those referred to municipal services by the Assistance System – are generally provided integration services to help with their situation, but if the integration services time limit has been passed and the person has not been identified as a trafficking victim, they most likely end up in the adult social services of the municipality. Resources for adult social services are restricted and opportunities for elaborate and individualized services are very limited according to the experts interviewed. The responsibility for arranging income or applying for assistance is mainly on the clients themselves. An interviewed representative of employment and social services said that if a client has additional challenges, such as mental trauma or issues with coping, they are at risk of ending up in the ‘grey zone’ of the society, i.e., the risk of re-victimisation is quite high.

2.5. Lack of time in services

The representatives of employment and social services reported that having limited time for providing personal services is an important reason for why it is challenging to provide personalised services to victims of human trafficking or exploitation and other migrants in vulnerable circumstances. This makes it also challenging to even recognise the client as someone whose situation warrants taking a closer look. According to a report of the

Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment (Karinen et al. 2020a, 35), employment services do not have enough time to provide guidance to individual integration clients, since the staff all have too many clients under their responsibility. Thus, the lack of services and resources can hinder integration and finding employment (ibid., 25). According to the experts interviewed, language barriers and the general lack of trust and fear of authorities on the clients' part are an issue as well, as one of the interviewees described:

They've started to add more clients to us as well which eats away our time. We want to have an effective society, we want to help people effectively, and I'm constantly getting feedback on this – but it will never work. It has never worked, and it will never work with these people who have multiple mental traumas, all sorts of crises, no relevant language skills, no security, no trust, no understanding of the Finnish society, so it's really hard to... Let's say I spend an hour with a client online or on the phone... That's a very typical duration. I've tried to extend it to two hours, so I could give them a fighting chance at least. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 7)

With the appointments being so short, there is no time to build trust between the client and the professional, and thus it is harder for the professional to identify potential victims of trafficking. Some of the victims do not trust any authorities. The mistrust may be based on previous experiences with police officers in their country of origin, on their way to Finland or in Finland, or on the things that their exploiter has told them. Employment and social services staff collect significant amounts of information on their clients in the performance of their duties, and although this is done to help the clients, it can also arouse suspicion on what the information is used for, which leads to the client having difficulties in trusting the staff. In addition, the interviewees reported that it is hard to consider the individual situations of trafficking victims or the personal reasons that could affect their employment opportunities within the restricted time available for appointments:

There's (...) a variety of paths in the employment services that people can take, so what could be the path for the client. But not in the way that, like, I would make some final unchangeable decision on the path on behalf of the person, no. Just that I could see the different opportunities, and to see 'ah, that's one possibility'. If I first feel that things are progressing nicely, and then there's a period

that's not so good, and the person doesn't... That they take a few steps backwards, then I might think that 'okay, this could be due to that experience' [of being a victim]. (...) But these are issues that, currently (...) are understandable to me as another human being, but that are not acceptable from the point of view of the Unemployment Security Act. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 6)

The employment and social services representatives felt that the administration being fragmented also has an effect on them only rarely having the opportunity to follow-up with individual clients in the long-term, since the clients being transferred from one path to another means that the employee in charge of the client's case is also constantly changing. It would be more beneficial for trafficking and exploitation victims to have a personal case worker for as long as possible. When asked about areas for development, one interviewee providing support to victims suggested that trafficked persons would most benefit from practical guidance, coaching and advice, particularly in the early stages of the process:

But coaching on working life, I think, in addition to language courses – and many need services that would support their mental health. Maybe something resembling career guidance. I think like some career guidance right at the start would be great for many. So they would understand that they are not as vulnerable now as they were in their previous job. And in general they could learn how employees should actually be treated. (...) And just services that generally support mental health and the ability to work on the side there, that would be really great. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 1)

In addition, the interviewed experts mentioned that victims would benefit from activity-based language training and tailored integration services as well as low-threshold intensive guidance with less time pressure compared to what clients experience in the general services. There are regional differences, since service selections and opportunities to participate in language courses and other training vary depending on region. According to Koskenoja et al. (2018, 111–112) larger cities with centralised integration services can have better capabilities to provide services and a better understanding on the impact that being a victim of trafficking, having mental trauma, and being a migrant have on a trafficked person's ability to function. On the other hand, smaller cities can have better opportunities

for cooperation between the municipality and the TE Office, and integration into the society may be faster and easier in these cities (Koskenoja, 2018, 112).

2.6. Residence permits

Nearly all interviewees discussed issues related to residence permits which hinder victims' chances of gaining employment and/or remaining in Finland in the first place. As one representative highlighted, questions related to residence permits are central to the issue of a victim being able to integrate into the Finnish society:

But residence permits, they're – in general they're a pretty big issue for human trafficking victims, because they can't get legal aid for applying for an extension, or free legal aid. And I think it's a pretty difficult process. (...) The client may not have all that much energy to focus on studying or vocational training and finding a job, when something as fundamental as whether they'll be allowed to stay in the country is still uncertain. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 4)

Most interviewees reported that issues related to residence permits are very difficult and taxing to trafficking victims, particularly when their future or the future of their family in Finland is on the line. In addition, the restricted right to work does not serve to encourage exploited workers to get away from the situation since they have to fear losing their residence permit. For example, in 2020, more than half of the victims identified by non-governmental organisations were afraid of losing their residence permit and being removed from the country, or had other uncertainties related to their right of residence (Neliapilajärjestöt 2020).

In order to register for TE Office services, victims of trafficking or exploitation must have a valid residence permit or a certificate from the Finnish Immigration Service stating that their application for an extended permit is being processed. Trafficking and exploitation victims can have a variety of grounds for their residence permit, but victims of labour exploitation usually have a sector-specific residence permit for the cleaning or restaurant sector, for example. This means they would need to find a new job in that specific sector.

According to the experts interviewed, a person who has worked in an ethnic restaurant can have difficulties finding other work in the restaurant sector. Victims of labour exploitation who had worked for Nepalese restaurants and who were interviewed for a Helsingin Sanomat article (HS 30 March 2019) also reported that they had not been able to find work in other ethnic restaurants, since the industry is small, and they had been branded as difficult to work with (see also info box 6). A representative of an organisation providing support to victims reported that having a sector-specific residence permit can hinder re-employment even if the holder of the permit applies for the removal of the sector restriction or changing it to another sector:

That's usually the problem with our clients finding work. That if they have a right to work in a restaurant included in their residence permit and they apply for a cleaning job – and that's even if they know they can apply for it [an extended right to work]. If they get the cleaning job and apply for the sector restriction to be removed or changed to the cleaning industry, the employer won't wait for it to be processed. The employer gives the job to someone who already has the right to work in that sector. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 1)

In addition, it is possible to have a residence permit for an employed person tied to the employer, in which case the person cannot register as a jobseeker at the TE Office. One interviewed representative of employment and social services described the situation as follows:

If a client's residence permit is tied to a certain employer, they are only entitled to work for that specific employer, and if their employment ends, legally, they have no right to work in Finland for any other employer. So they can't become TE Office clients, since they can't be offered any work from any other employer, which means that they are not freely available on the labour market. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 8)

Of course, if such a person is a victim of labour exploitation, the situation is problematic. According to the experts interviewed, most victims of labour exploitation are in a hurry to find a new job, and the hurry is usually largely related to their residence permit as well as their responsibility for providing for their family either in Finland or in their home country:

Of course, it's also a challenge that for many, the situation goes from bad to only slightly better. I mean, many of our clients have gotten away from a very bad job just to end up working another job where things are still bad. They end up working under another wannabe tyrant, but this one is just a tiny bit better. And then most need to get an extended permit for themselves or for their family. So being unemployed for a longer time to look for a more suitable job meeting all the statutory requirements is not an option for them. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 1)

⁷ <https://migri.fi/en/income-requirement-for-family-members-of-a-person-who-has-been-granted-a-residence-permit-in-finland> Accessed 17 August 2021.

In particular, the income requirement related to residence permits granted based on family ties puts great pressure on those victims of trafficking and exploitation who have a work permit and who have brought their family into Finland. For example, according to the formula used by the Finnish Immigration Service, a family with two adults and two under-aged children requires a total income of EUR 2,600 each month to meet the income requirement.⁷ Both the interviewed parties providing support to victims and the employment and social services representatives reported that the risk of re-victimisation is high. There have been cases, where a person is paid an income meeting the Finnish Immigration Service's income requirement on paper but is then forced to return a share of the pay to the employer or to work very long hours without any separate compensation. One interviewee described the situation as follows:

But there are these laws that you have to have a certain amount of income for you to... Either for you to have the right of residence here or to bring a family member here, so that's very stressful and I think that in itself puts these people in a difficult situation and makes it hard to help them. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 7)

According to section 52 of the Aliens Act (301/2004), victims whose case is being investigated as human trafficking and who do not have a valid residence permit are entitled to a temporary or continuous residence permit. These permits do not have the income requirement. Issues arise in situations where the type of the crime is changed from human trafficking to something else in the course of the criminal investigation, because the grounds for the residence permit then cease to exist and the person is no longer eligible for the services of the Assistance System. In their desperation, a person finding themselves in this situation may accept a job

with any terms and conditions so that they can apply for a work permit instead; this means they are at risk of ending up a victim of labour exploitation again. In addition, according to organisations providing support to victims, there is a risk that a person who cannot renew their residence permit on any grounds becomes an undocumented migrant:

Since the residence permit for victims of trafficking is tied to the criminal procedure and, what's more, to what they call the crime being investigated, it's obvious that this involves structural risks. So, if you lose your right for the services of the Assistance System, it doesn't always mean that it's certain that you're not a trafficking victim. Then you won't be granted a permit, and if you don't leave and return to your country of origin, then that's of course a risky situation, and the risk is that you become an undocumented migrant in Finland and you only have access to the services that we have available for the undocumented in different regions and municipalities, and those of course vary significantly on top of everything else. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 2)

However, the amendments to the Aliens Act that entered into force on 1 October 2021 enable granting an extended permit of one year for migrants who have been exploited for labour (section 54b). The extended permit is granted for the purpose of finding a new job or starting a business if there are justified grounds to suspect that the migrant worker's employer has neglected their obligations as an employer in a significant way or otherwise exploited the person. The residence permit is granted as continuous for one year after the expiration of the previous permit and its granting does not require that the person's income is secured. (HE 253/2020 vp.) This change has the potential to improve the situation of some workers and enable finding work in other sectors of economy rather than just in the sector where the migrant worker was previously exploited.

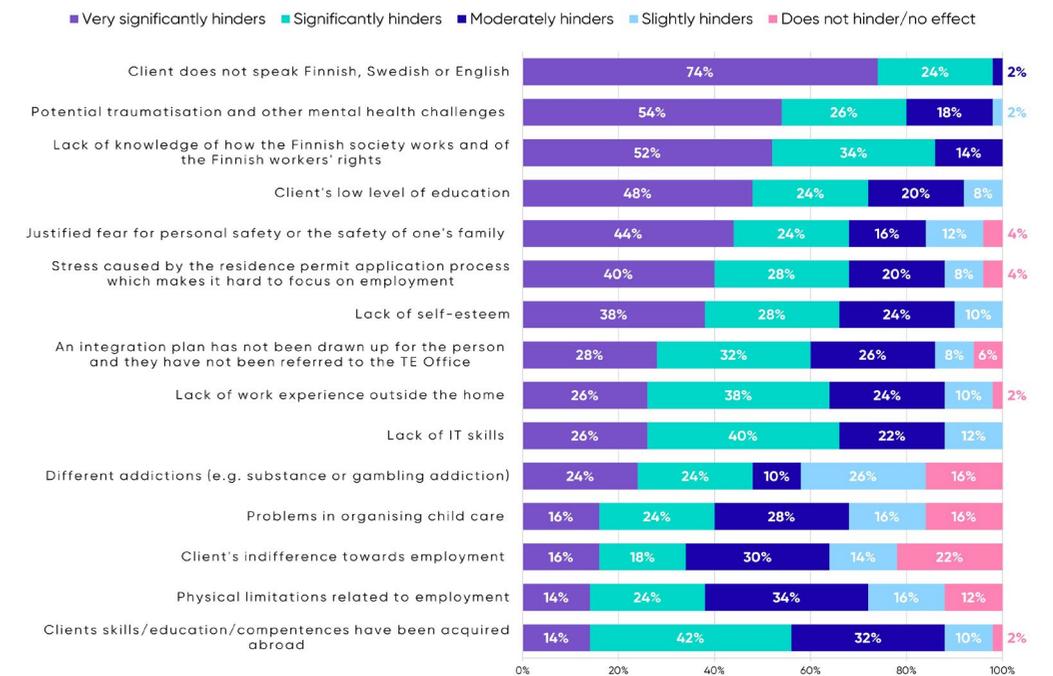
3. Individual challenges

This chapter presents the individual challenges and aspects associated with the employment of migrant victims of trafficking and labour exploitation.

3.1. Individual challenges of trafficking victims according to the questionnaire results

Multiple choice questions in the questionnaire were used to find out the most common factors which hinder victims' employment and increase the risk of re-victimisation. The results are discussed below.

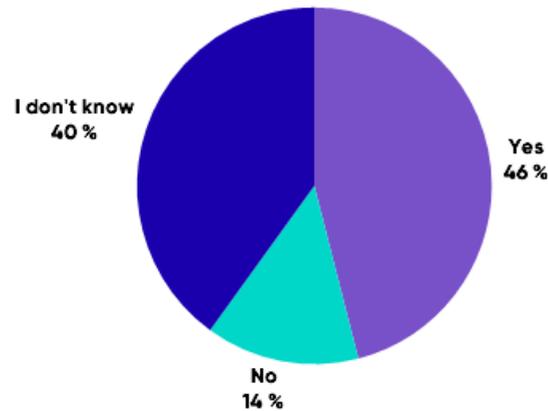
GRAPH 5. To what extent do the following individual issues affect the employment of victims of exploitation or trafficking? N=50.



More than half of the respondents considered traumatisation (54%), and the lack of understanding of how the Finnish society works and of the Finnish rights of employees (52%) as individual factors very significantly hindering the employment of victims. Other factors considered to very significantly hinder victims' employment were a low level of education (48%), justified fears for personal safety (44%), and the stress caused by the residence permit application process (40%). More than one third of the respondents deemed these factors as significant. More than half of the individual factors were deemed to be at least somewhat significant.

The respondents had mixed views (see Figure 6) on whether the employment-related challenges faced by trafficking or exploitation victims are different from the challenges faced by other vulnerable groups (e.g. people with a medical condition lowering their ability to work). Of the respondents, 40 per cent felt that the employment challenges of trafficking victims were different from the challenges faced by other vulnerable groups, whereas 46 per cent responded ‘I don’t know’ and 14 per cent disagreed with the statement.

GRAPH 6. Do the employment challenges of victims or exploitation or trafficking differ from the employment challenges of other vulnerable groups (e.g. people who have an illness that hinders their work ability)? N=50.



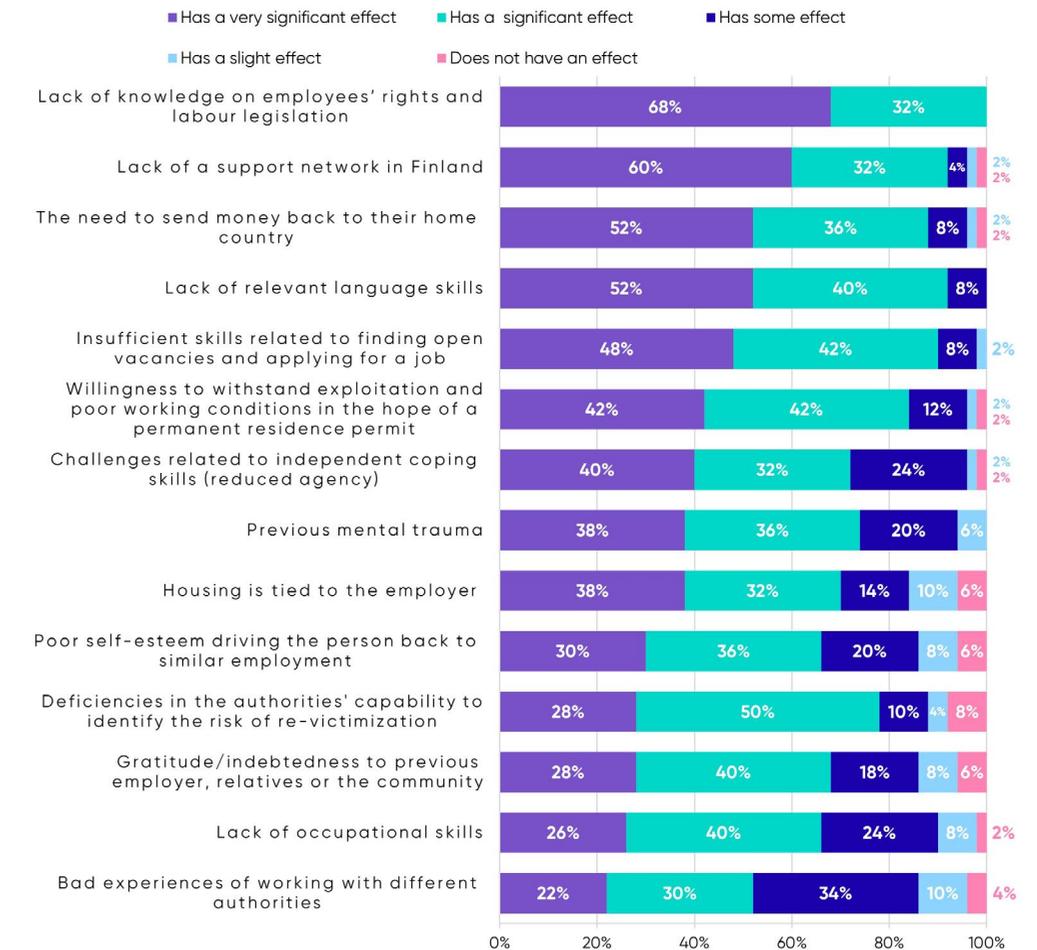
In the free text answers, the respondents that responded ‘Yes’ to the above question mentioned the impact of trauma, reduced functional capacity, lack of relevant language skills, and difficulties expressing their situation in a manner that would make their need for support apparent as the challenges specific to victims of trafficking. Some respondents highlighted the difficult situation of labour exploitation victims and their dependence on the employer who is exploiting them:

Victims of labour exploitation are in a particularly vulnerable situation. Their trust in authorities and the system can be non-existent, and they do not always have enough information on their rights. Being exploited by an employer has an impact on your entire professional life. (A questionnaire respondent)

Tearing down barriers is more difficult, since often their professional and social network comprises entirely of people exploiting them. Getting out of that situation takes a lot of support and many struggle with issues related to residence permits, dealing with the authorities, and applying for jobs. (A questionnaire respondent)

The respondents were also asked to assess individual factors affecting the risk of re-victimisation.

GRAPH 7. Factors affecting the risk of re-victimisation. N= 50.



Of the respondents, 68 per cent felt that a lack of knowledge on employees’ rights and labour legislation have a very significant effect on whether a person falls victim of labour exploitation again. More than half of the respondents felt that the lack of a support network (60%), the need to send money back to their home country (52%), and lack of relevant language skills (52%) also very significantly increase the risk re-victimisation. Half of the respondents considered the deficiencies in the risk identification capabilities of authorities to have a significant effect on the risk of re-victimisation.

3.2. Language skills, education and training

As the questionnaire results also indicated, the re-employment of victims is associated with many challenges related to language skills, education and training. All interviewed experts specifically mentioned the lack of relevant language skills as a key factor hindering employment. In addition to their employment, the victims' lack of relevant language skills significantly hinders the overall process of integrating into the Finnish society:

To me, that's one of the biggest issues, the lack of relevant language skills. It's related to participation in the society and everything that goes on within the society, not just employment. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 6)

The interviewees rather unanimously felt that language courses should be among the very first services their clients are granted access to. The interviewed experts stated that if a person does not know Finnish or English, their chances of finding work are slim. Trafficking and exploitation victims can also have issues with reading and writing, which makes learning a new language even harder and also hinders benefitting from other education or training and acquiring information on their rights as employees, for example. One interviewee described the issue as follows:

These days we have a lot of material available in a lot of languages in Finland, but they won't... It won't reach all those people, particularly if there's someone sort of keeping them hidden, or they can't figure things out on their own due to their lack of relevant language skills. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 9)

The lack of relevant language skills and information can lead to situations where a person's lack of knowledge on their rights as an employee is taken advantage of at a new job, for example. Based on previous literature, particularly victims of forced labour in Finland have often been provided false information by their employer on labour legislation, provisions on residence permits, and their rights as employees, and the victims have been prevented from accessing factual information on the rules of the labour market in Finland (e.g. Jokinen et al. 2011; Jokinen & Ollus 2014; Koskenoja et al. 2018). The victims can fear and mistrust authorities. Their lack of knowledge and false conceptions can make it harder for them to

benefit from employment services and understand the Finnish service structure as well as gain employment. (Koskenoja et al. 2018, 72, 105 and 120; Roth & Luhtasaari 2021, 31; Ministry of the Interior, 2021, 28.) Therefore, it is very important that information on the rights of employees and opportunities for seeking assistance is available in different languages and in a variety of formats.

Information also spreads within language groups and groups of friends and acquaintances. Informal peer support can be a great help when learning to understand the practices of a new country, but the interviewees also felt that it is important to ensure that (official) information and guidance is available in the native languages of migrants to avoid misunderstandings:

(...) information flows well along the grapevine, and that also applies to wrong information being passed from one client to the next. It reaches me and then I'm left thinking, oh dear, where is this even coming from. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 6)

The following info box presents presents videos by Victim Support Finland on the rights of employees, their special support service, and their seasonal work helpline as well as the immigrant employee hotline of SAK and its member organisations.

INFO BOX 1. Good practices of Victim Support Finland and trade unions.

Videos on employees' rights in Finland and a hotline for seasonal workers

Victim Support Finland has produced an animated [video](#) on employees' rights in Finland in 16 languages to combat labour exploitation. Victim Support Finland also has a special support service with staff that specialise in providing guidance to victims of trafficking and exploitation.⁸ A dedicated [hotline](#) is available for seasonal workers during the berry picking season from June to early September. The hotline provides guidance in four languages: Finnish, Swedish, English and Russian. The service is accessible in other languages as well with remote interpreting.⁹

The Central Organisation of Finnish Trade Unions SAK and its member unions fund an [employee rights hotline for immigrants](#). The number of calls made to the hotline has been increasing. The employee rights hotline aims specifically at reaching migrants who are not members of a trade union and other people arriving in Finland and falling in the gaps between services, such as seasonal workers and posted workers. Of the people that have called the hotline this year, 8.5 per cent stated they were a member of a trade union. (SAK 2020.) See also their new [website](#).

⁸ <https://www.riku.fi/en/services/service-for-victims-of-human-trafficking-and-related-crimes/>

Accessed 19 April 2021.

⁹ <https://www.riku.fi/seasonalwork/> Accessed 23 June 2021.

The interviewed parties providing support to victims have encountered cases where a trafficking victim had become a victim in their new job as well and had their lack of knowledge exploited.

Unfortunately, we also encounter situations where a person who's been a victim once finds a new job – and it could be found through official above-board employment services – and the new job is also exploitative in some way. On paper everything seems good, but there are levels to the exploitation. So, it may not meet the criteria to call it human trafficking, but nevertheless, the person is exploited again (...) No one talks about these things or about the working life skills needed, like what rights employees have. They've not been discussed enough beforehand with the person. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 3)

According to the interviewed experts, information about the Finnish working life should be provided as part of the integration training and language courses more than currently. One interviewed representative of employment and social services reported that events where trade unions talk about working life in plain Finnish and take questions have been found very useful by the participants.

We've received a lot of great feedback on those, and the participants have said that they learned a lot that they didn't know before. They've been taught about (...) holidays, terminating employment and employment contracts, salaries and wages, and a lot more. And we've tried to promote this in our project, that these sorts of events, either in the participants' native language or in plain Finnish, would become a regular part of employment services. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 5)

A few other interviewees also called for similar coordinated, low-threshold introductions into working life and the basic mechanisms of the Finnish society. For example, introduction courses in the participants' native language, where the participants would be taught about e.g. the Finnish tax system and the rights and obligations of the individual in general, are an important method for providing information on the Finnish working life to migrants. For example, Service Union United PAM annually offers its members Finnish language courses that also include information on the basics of employees' rights in Finland. This activity is presented in the following info box.

INFO BOX 2. 'Learn Finnish' courses**PAM's language courses and support for Nepalese restaurant workers**

PAM is the trade union for those working in the private service sector. Most of its 210,000 members work in retail, tourism, restaurant or leisure services, property services, or security services.¹⁰ Around 11,500 of its members have a migrant background and the largest native languages among them are Estonian and Russian.¹¹ PAM has offered the 'Learn Finnish' courses for its members for several years now. The courses are aimed at people working in the service sectors, for example, as cleaners, salespersons, or restaurant workers. During the course, the students also learn about Finnish working life and its practices and rules.¹²

In 2019–2020, PAM took part in providing support for Nepalese restaurant workers in transitioning to a new job under a responsible employer with the board member companies of the Finnish Hospitality Association MaRa (see also info box 6). In addition, PAM has organised events and training for the Nepalese workers on Finnish labour legislation via an interpreter. In 2020, PAM offered the Nepalese restaurant workers Finnish language training tailored specifically to them. PAM adopted a special provision on providing legal assistance to the Nepalese workers and stated that it is committed to supporting victims of labour exploitation regardless of whether they meet the usual requirement of having been a member of PAM for at least six months.¹³

¹⁰ <https://www.pam.fi/en/about-pam.html> Accessed 23 June 2021.

¹¹ Personal communication with a PAM representative on 18 August 2021.

¹² <https://www.pam.fi/en/news/apply-for-the-spring-course-learn-finnish.html> Accessed 23 June 2021.

¹³ <https://www.pam.fi/en/news/work-related-exploitation-has-been-revealed-in-the-nepalese-restaurants-highlighting-the-labor-markets-deviation-sides.html> Accessed 23 June 2021.

According to the experts interviewed, also a lack of practical digital skills is a significant challenge when dealing with different authorities, since more and more matters are handled online and in writing. Registering as an unemployed jobseeker, applying for benefits, and completing a plethora of forms can be very difficult for someone who lacks the necessary language skills. According to the parties providing support to victims, there is a significant need for low-threshold practical guidance and advice:

[There are clients] who have never been officially 'unemployed' in their life. They didn't know how to register as an unemployed jobseeker or how to fill in any of the forms. They didn't know this even if they were members of an unemployment fund, since the funds have no service for helping people fill out their forms. And the social services couldn't really help either. Not to mention Kela, they might call someone who doesn't have the necessary language skills about completing some form. That didn't really help either. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 1)

One interviewed employment and social services representative also highlighted the need to provide support with digital skills and training in computer use (in a person's native language). Sometimes the computer training must be started from the absolute basics, but after that, the training can be provided remotely as well. If training in a person's native language cannot be provided, the training can be provided in plain Finnish, in which case it also serves as a method for practicing Finnish. In addition, digital skills and a smart device of their own will help the person find information and apply for jobs, enable them to handle their matters online, and strengthen their sense of agency.

A lack of basic and/or vocational education and different mandatory qualifications can hinder the employment of victims in low paying industries as well. The mandatory Hygiene Passport¹⁴ was mentioned as an example from the restaurant sector. Representatives of employment and social services in particular highlighted that participating in language training or vocational education can be challenging for many:

In vocational education, the issue is clearly that the vocational qualification includes general subjects, such as maths and English and so on. Very few of our clients can pass those subjects. I mean, we're talking about people who usually have been in Finland for three or four years, not many of these people can get full vocational qualifications. It will be a partial qualification or a further vocational qualification, which of course affects finding a job. There are challenges every step of the way. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 4)

In the interviews, other employment and social services representatives also highlighted that many vulnerable people only have a partial work ability. The work ability of trafficked persons can be decreased because of the psychological or physical consequences of trafficking or exploitation, or more generally, due to a lack of transferable skills. Therefore, victims' position in the labour market can be vulnerable in several different ways.

¹⁴ Employees in the food business must have a Hygiene Passport if they in their work handle unpacked and easily perishable foods such as milk, meat and fish. For more details, please see: <https://hygienepassport.fi/hygieniapassi>

Different mental and possibly physical challenges can occur, and according to the interviewees, the person may have a hard time finding the motivation or committing to the process that takes up all their time for several years.

Trafficking victims may also be in the middle of complex criminal procedures and court processes related to human trafficking or labour exploitation. These can require visits to the police or meetings with other authorities, which require victims to take off time from work or from different mandatory courses. The criminal justice processes can take years and be unpredictable, which can create challenges related to employment. (Roth & Luhtasaari 2021, 32; De Luca et al. 2020; Balch et al. 2017, 15, 27; Roberts 2018, 2.) As one interviewed employment and social services representative stated, more flexibility and options are needed for migrants with a decreased ability to work:

If the starting point is that you first have to learn Finnish and then go to comprehensive school to get a basic education and then enter working life – that’s a very big challenge. And often its associated with – the work ability of many of our clients is already so decreased that they would not even be accepted to vocational education. (...) So, I wish there was more of these options for people with a partial work ability and options for getting partial qualifications. (Employment and social service expert – Interview 5)

According to several interviewees, options for migrants with a partial work ability would promote employment for this client group in the long term, since the options would address their personal challenges better and more flexibly than before. After such demoralising experiences, the thought of actively looking for a new job or starting studies can feel overwhelming. According to the interviewees, the service selection is lacking options suitable for victims of human trafficking and labour exploitation, which leads to the victims being excluded from the labour market.

3.3. Effects of exploitation and violence

Many of the interviewees also reported challenges faced by victims of trafficking related to mental health, mental trauma and experienced violence. Many trafficking victims have previous mental trauma or other factors rendering them vulnerable which – in combination with the trauma resulting from being exploited – significantly decrease their ability to work:

One challenge is that the exploitation has such large mental effects that the people develop mental illness, or their mental health is hanging in the balance, and they need health care and other support of that type before they can start working again. (...) Human trafficking as a phenomenon is one that – often people who are already somehow vulnerable, like maybe they already have a mental health issue or maybe a personality disorder. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 2)

According to Koskenoja et al. (2018, 162–163) some of the trafficking victims with a migrant background living in Finland have significant mental health issues or even display symptoms of psychosis, and their rehabilitation can be very difficult. The primary need of a traumatised trafficking victim is often support services to help them overcome the trauma and exploitation (e.g. Hopper & Gonzalez 2018, 187; Koskenoja et al. 2018, 112–113; Shigekane 2007, 135).

According to the parties providing support to victims, the work ability of persons who have experienced exploitation can vary depending on the stages of the criminal procedure, and a person who has found a new job can become overwhelmed by the procedure to the degree that they momentarily cannot work. However, for some, finding a new job can affect and improve mental health and have a positive effect on overall coping. According to one interviewee providing support to victims, people who have experienced exploitation can have a distorted view of a normal relationship between an employee and an employer:

Many have severe issues with self-esteem. And a distorted view of what a normal relationship between an employee and an employer is like. They think that the employer is like an all-mighty king. It’s like that almost everywhere. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 1)

The previous experiences and mental trauma of victims can create a variety of challenges related to fitting in the work community or getting to know the work culture. Victims who may have been subject to exploitation and abuse for years can have difficulties forming a bond with their new job and work community. According to the representatives of victim support services, exploitation can reduce a victim’s self-esteem and decrease work ability in several ways. It is also common that the victims

suffer symptoms related to post-traumatic stress, which do not correlate with the person's actual work ability or usual behaviour. For example, things may need to be repeated to the victim several times. One interviewee stated the following:

At that stage, where these people need these services and are trying to re-build their lives, they're often also still in the middle of recovering, so it's important that we understand why a client does not arrive to an appointment or keeps forgetting things. That we understand how the trauma affects the client. That's the way I look at it, that us professionals should know and understand our target group better. But there are significant deficiencies in that. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 3)

Many of the interviewees reported that TE Office employees do not necessarily have the required understanding on the effects of mental trauma on a person's behaviour and that more training is required. A person with severe mental trauma may not be fully capable of participating in training and language courses. As one employment and social services representative stated, mental trauma is a process and no situation is the same and as such, each person's case should be assessed individually:

Trauma is a process. And I'm sure – or at least I think – that there are good days and there are bad days. And there's everything that happens in their country of origin, that has an effect too. And some are completely incapacitated (...) But then there are some that cope with it all remarkably well. Some are so resilient that they can recover from the horrible events and learn the required level of Finnish in less than a year. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 6)

3.4. Women and people with families

Several interviewees also discussed challenges faced by female victims in particular and the employment of migrant women in general. Studies have shown that in Finland, immigrant women are generally more often unemployed than immigrant men (Bontenbal et al. 2019, 253; Larja & Sutela 2015, 71, 73, 78). In addition to age and other factors, gender has an effect on the employment and integration of trafficking victims (Corbanese & Rosas 2020, 11; EIGE 2018, 33). Compared to Finns, a significantly larger share of migrant women take care of their children at home full time, which partly explains the difference observed between gen-

ders (Bontenbal et al. 2019, 253; Larja & Sutela 2015, 74–75). According to the interviewees, experiencing domestic violence, being a stay-at-home mother for an extended time, and opinions on whether it is appropriate for women to work outside of home or in certain industries are examples of factors that can hinder the employment of women.

The interviewed employment and social services representatives had encountered cases where a husband had tried to forbid his wife from participating in vocational education or otherwise had tried to make it more difficult for the wife to attend language courses. One interviewed victim service provider also reported a variety of practical challenges that the parents of young children – most often women – may face and that restrict the parents' opportunities for employment and education:

The trafficking victims in our client groups – the thing that's challenging is that many have kids. It affects their opportunities for employment in several ways. It's the flexibility that's required for family life to function. (...) For those with no support networks here in Finland, there may be no one else here who could look after the kids, and they may not be entitled to day care either. So, that of course makes finding work more difficult, and it limits what jobs they can apply for or accept, if offered. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 3)

Based on previous literature as well, many of the female trafficking victims with a migrant background in Finland are single parents, for whom not being eligible for day care services or the long waiting times for day care spots are a key factor slowing down integration and gaining employment (De Luca et al. 2020, 28; Koskenoja et al. 2018, 106). If a trafficking victim's family is not in Finland, they may be under tremendous pressure to move their family into Finland and to find a job that would meet the income requirement for a residence permit for an employed person (for more on residence permits, see section 2.6). One employment and social services representative noted that it may be difficult for a person to concentrate on their studies or other activities under such circumstances:

If they have a family that's not in Finland, it definitely has a negative impact on their language learning and everything they do to move forward. And family reunification has been made very difficult in the last few years, since now there's the income requirement. It really takes a toll on their coping. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 4)

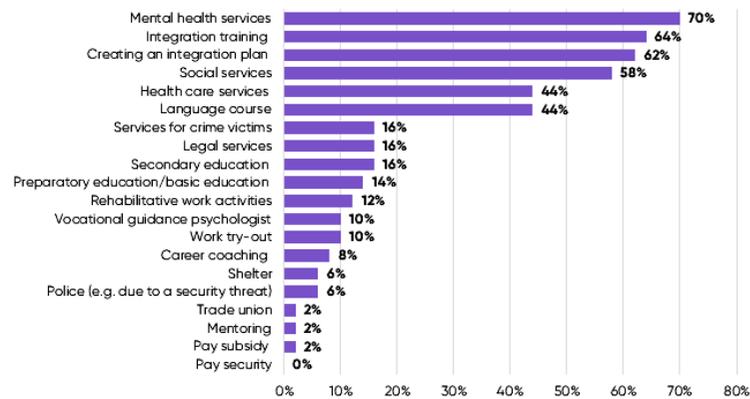
3.5. Example cases: referring trafficking victims to services based on their needs

Victims of trafficking and labour exploitation have diverse backgrounds and their experiences and the support they need to gain new employment can be very varied as well. Therefore, in the questionnaire we presented four fictional cases in which a person had fallen victim to human trafficking or labour exploitation. The respondents were asked to read the short description of each case and to answer a set of questions on the services they would primarily refer each of the clients to, on the basis of their individual situation and the information available.

Case A.

You meet a Nigerian woman who was forced into prostitution in Italy and transported into Finland via several European countries three years ago. In Finland, she was identified as a victim of trafficking for sexual exploitation, and she became a client of the National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking. She was granted a residence permit around a year ago and the municipality referred her to the TE Office. She has a three-year-old child. She speaks basic English and Italian and has a basic education from her home country.

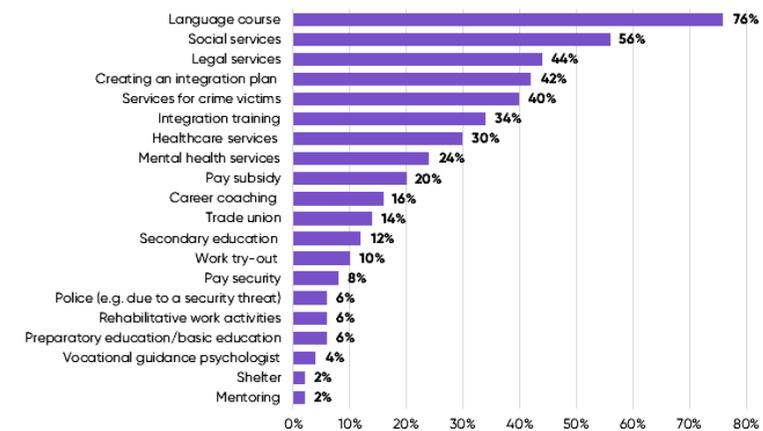
GRAPH 8. Case example A, services referred to primarily.



Case B.

You meet a 50-year-old Nepalese man who has worked as a cook. He has worked in a Nepalese restaurant for just over five years. Around a year ago, charges were brought up against the owner of the restaurant for human trafficking, and your client is a plaintiff in the case. The man came to Finland on the basis of having a work permit, and he has not been a client of integration services. He has spent most of his time here working in the restaurant kitchen or in the accommodation arranged by his employer. He is mostly not familiar with the Finnish society, has no knowledge of Finnish labour legislation, and only knows a few words of Finnish. He only speaks Nepalese, and he has a qualification to work as a cook from Nepal.

GRAPH 9. Case example B, services referred to primarily.

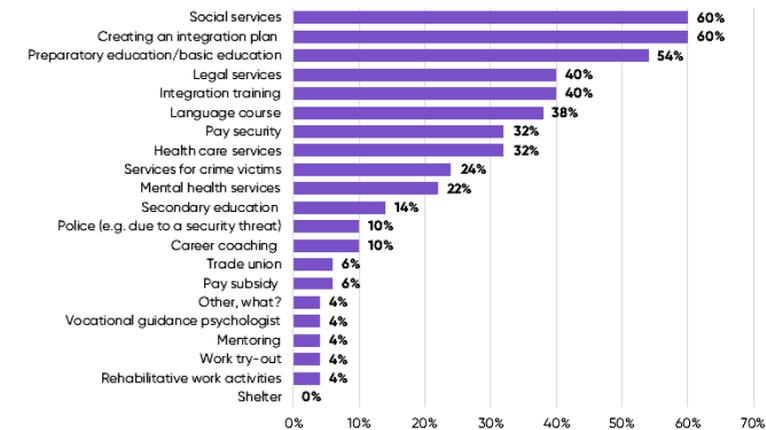


For this case example, 76 per cent of the respondents would refer the man – who has most likely been already identified as a victim of labour exploitation – to a language course. More than half of the respondents would refer him to social services. A total of 44 per cent of the respondents would refer him to legal services and 40 per cent to services for crime victims. Of the options for supporting the man’s re-employment, the most popular answers were pay subsidy (20%), career coaching (16%) and trade union (14%). Nearly a quarter of the respondents said they would most likely refer the man to health care services (30%) and mental health services (24%).

A significantly smaller share of the respondents would refer the Nepalese man to mental health services compared to the Nigerian woman in the previous example case (A), whom two-thirds would have referred to mental health services as the primary service option. This is a notable difference since the man, who had been exploited for five years, could benefit from such services as well.

Case C.

You meet an Iraqi man who has arrived in Finland as an unaccompanied asylum seeking minor three years ago. He worked as a factory night cleaner until the employer company went into bankruptcy and its CEO left Finland. The man had been paid between EUR 3.5 and EUR 4 per hour without any of the statutory supplements and he had worked six nights each week, from 9 pm to 6 am without breaks, for two years. He had not been paid for the last three months. He is now legally an adult and has just been granted a residence permit. He knows a little English and Finnish, but he has trouble with reading and writing.



GRAPH 10. Case example C, services referred to primarily.

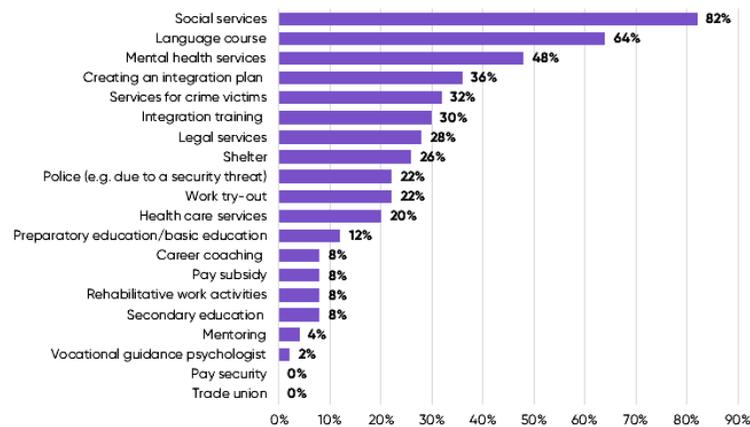
The service paths suggested for this client were mostly similar to those suggested for the others, but more than half of the respondents (54%) would recommend preparatory education or basic education for the Iraqi man. The man was the youngest of the example case clients, and his young age most likely affected the decisions of many of the respondents who saw different education-related service paths as the best option. Around two-fifths of the respondents would refer him to language courses (38%) and/or integration training (40%) One in three respondents would advise him to apply for pay security¹⁵. Services for crime victims (24%), healthcare services (32%) and mental health services (22%) were also considered primary service options.

¹⁵ The pay security system enables the payment of employee claims arising from an employment relationship in the event of employer insolvency. For more details, please see <https://www.ely-keskus.fi/web/ely-en/pay-security>

Case D.

You meet a Thai woman who has moved into Finland four years ago after marrying a man who owns a small farm. The woman does not speak Finnish, Swedish or English, but she writes and reads her native language fluently. An integration plan was drafted for her after she arrived in Finland, but she became a stay-at-home mother after giving birth. The woman says she has only dealt with Finnish authorities together with her husband, and she has not met any people outside the husband's family and friends, since her life has been very restricted. The husband was controlling and physically and psychologically abusive and had forced her to do physically straining work at the farm without compensation. She has no official work experience outside the farm and no money. She has received home care allowance, but the husband had given his own bank account number for the allowance and used it himself. Health services had referred the woman and her three-year-old to a shelter for victims of domestic violence, and she wants to find work so she can support herself and her child.

GRAPH 11. Case example D, services referred to primarily.



For the Thai woman, social services were the most popular option with 82 per cent of the respondents choosing it as the primary service option. Many respondents (64%) would refer her to a language course. In addition, nearly a quarter of the respondents would refer the woman to the police. Nearly half of the respondents (48%) would refer her to mental health services. A total of 28 per cent would refer her to legal services, and 26 per cent to a shelter. Of the service options promoting employment, the most popular option was work try-out (22%).

The example case results demonstrate that victims of human trafficking and labour exploitation are referred to a variety of services as a primary option based on their situation. Different individual factors effect these decisions, such as the victim's gender, age, educational background, language skills and other personal characteristics. However, different expectations and prejudices also possibly play a part. Therefore, for example, a male victim of labour exploitation is not necessarily referred to mental health services as a primary option, whereas a female victim of sexual exploitation is. There is very little research available on the subject, but according to studies on the effects of human trafficking, violence and control have different effects on women and men, depending particularly on the severity of the violence and the type of human trafficking experienced by the person (e.g. Iglesias-Rios et al. 2018; Turner-Moss et al. 2013).

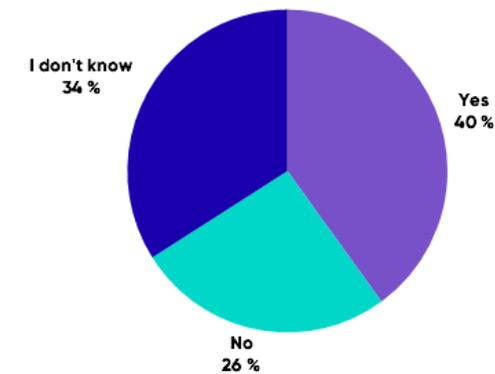
Based on the limited data collected it is difficult to make any generalisations, but the results raise the question of whether referral to services is at least to certain degree influenced by prejudices based on stereotypical assumptions on the needs of different types of people. Further research is needed, but it is important that referring clients to services is based on the clients' individual needs and not on assumptions made based on their gender, for example.

4. Opportunities and practices for employing trafficking victims

In addition to individual challenges, the interviewed experts and the respondents of the questionnaire brought up opportunities for supporting the employment of victims of human trafficking and labour exploitation. This chapter presents these opportunities, methods and practices that can be used to develop services promoting the integration trafficked and exploited migrants into working life.

4.1. Interacting with victims at employment services

First, the results of the questionnaire are presented. The questionnaire was used to collect information on the practices of the respondents' organisations related to working with victims of trafficking and labour exploitation. As previously mentioned, the respondents were exceptionally experienced and 86 per cent had met a trafficking victim in their line of work, so their responses cannot be seen to represent employment service providers generally.



GRAPH 12. Does a client's previous experience of trafficking or labour exploitation effect the practices of your organization? N=50.

Of the respondents, as many as 40 per cent reported that their organisation had practices in place for handling cases involving victims of human trafficking or labour exploitation. In contrast, 26 per cent reported that their organisation did not have such practices in place and 34 per cent did not know whether their organisation had such practices in place. Based on the free text answers, the needs and individual circumstances of clients are considered whenever possible. However, deficiencies were also reported. For example, too short appointments with clients, inflexible service models, and organisations' lack of practical guidelines were given as possible reasons to why the fact that a client is a victim of exploitation does not necessarily come out and/or why the organisation has no specialised practices in place. One respondent described their practices as follows:

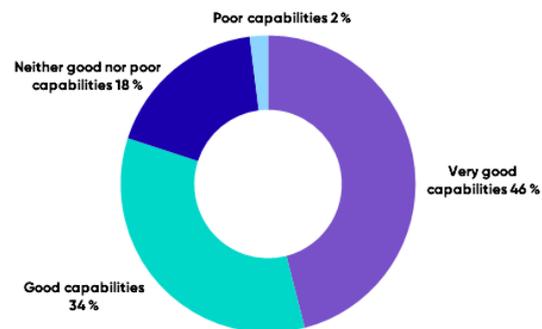
We don't have any clear guidelines yet, but we try our best at considering the person's background when we offer them employment, entrepreneurship and training services. (A questionnaire respondent)

The respondents were also asked about the practices already established in their organisation related to working or interacting with victims of trafficking or other exploitation. Of the respondents, 72 per cent reported that they can consult a person in their organisation who has expertise in the subject and have access to information on human trafficking and labour exploitation. In addition, as many as 65 per cent of the respondents had taken part in training related to human trafficking. A total of 60 per cent reported that the organisation they represent has an employee specialising in working with vulnerable groups. However, according to the responses, more than half of the organisations did not have employees specialising in promoting the employment of vulnerable groups.

In addition, respondents were also asked to assess the usefulness of existing practices. The respondents considered guidelines provided by their organisation on how to act with clients who are victims of trafficking or exploitation (67%) and training on working with victims of trafficking or exploitation (61%) as the most necessary. In addition, 60 per cent of the respondents considered it useful to have a person in their organisation that specialises in working with vulnerable groups. Half of the respondents considered it useful to have a person specialising in promoting the employment of vulnerable groups and to have access to information on human trafficking and labour exploitation.

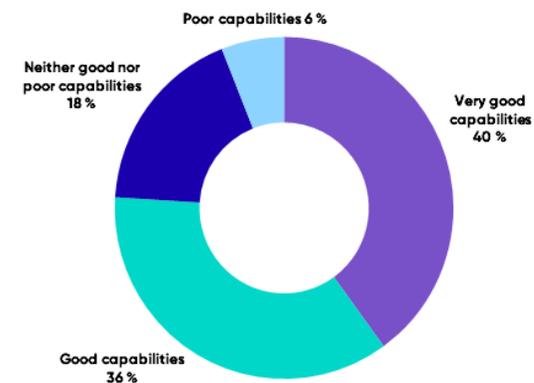
At the end of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to assess their organisation's capabilities for intensive multiagency collaboration, for providing individual support, and for meeting the needs of victims who are in a vulnerable situation. The respondents were asked to assess these capabilities on a five-step scale from 'very poor capabilities' to 'very good capabilities'.

GRAPH 13. Organisation's capabilities to engage in intensive multiagency collaboration. N=50.



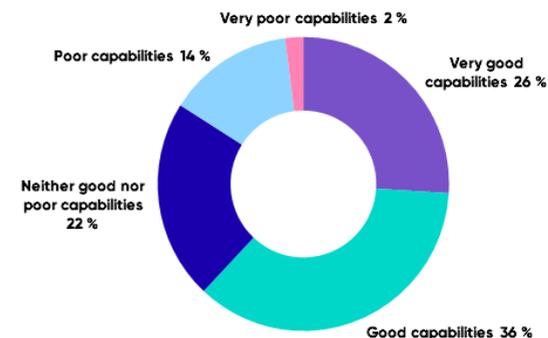
Of the respondents, 46 per cent considered to have excellent capabilities in their work to engage in intensive multiagency collaboration. Nearly one third of the respondents considered they had good capabilities for intensive multiagency collaboration. A total of 18 per cent felt that their organisation's capabilities for multiagency collaboration were neither good nor poor. Only two per cent of the respondents considered the capabilities poor.

GRAPH 14. Organisation's capabilities to provide individual support. N=50.



Of the respondents, 40 per cent considered their capabilities for providing individual support in their work as very good, and 36 per cent considered them good. A total of 18 per cent felt that their capabilities for providing individual support were neither good nor poor. The capabilities were considered poor by six per cent, but none of the respondents considered them very poor.

GRAPH 15. Organisation's capabilities to meet the needs of people in a vulnerable situation. N=50.

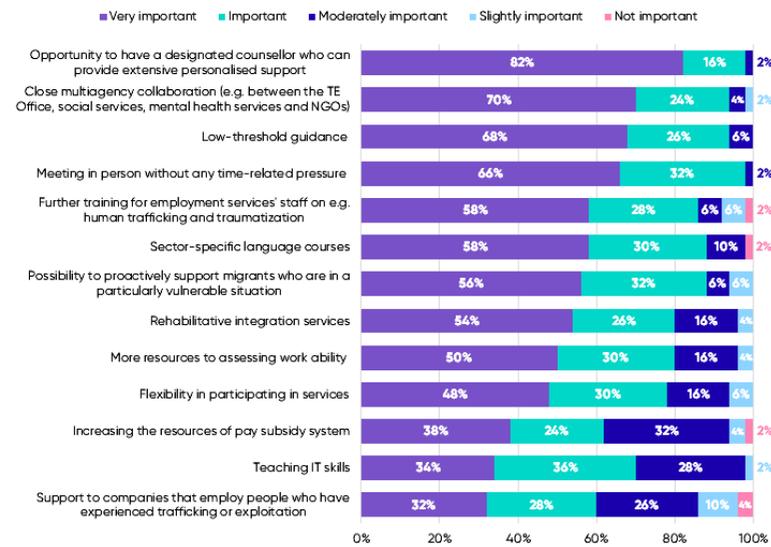


The capabilities for meeting the needs of victims of trafficking and exploitation were mostly considered good (36%) or very good (26%). Some respondents felt that their capabilities to meet the particular needs of people in a vulnerable situation were not as good: 14 per cent of the respondents considered them poor and two per cent very poor. A notably large share of respondents felt that their capabilities for meeting the needs of trafficking victims or people otherwise in a vulnerable situation are poor.

4.2. Promoting employment in practice

According to the interviewed experts and previous literature, trafficked persons require intensive support and guidance. Guidance is needed, for example, in dealing with the authorities and in issues related to housing, employment and children. (Koskenoja et al. 2018, 104–105.) Often the need for support is greater than what the service system is capable of providing (Roth & Luhtasaari 2021, 33). This was also apparent from the questionnaire responses.

GRAPH 16. Importance of services to support the employment of victims of trafficking (irrespective of resources). N= 50.



As many as 82 per cent of the respondents considered it important to have the opportunity to have a designated counsellor who can provide extensive personalised support. A total of 70 per cent considered close multiagency collaboration between the TE Office, social services, mental health services and non-governmental organisations important. In addition, 68 per cent of the respondents felt that low-threshold guidance is very important for promoting the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims. Meeting in person without any time-related pressure was considered a very important (66%) or important (32%) part of promoting employment.

The interviewed experts also reported that victims of trafficking and exploitation often require a lot of practical support and advice on services. These include applying for unemployment benefit, helping clients complete various forms, drafting a CV and job applications, and providing other advice and guidance. Clients can be assisted by telling them which websites they can use to look for vacancies and by walking them through a typical Finnish recruitment process.

According to the parties providing support to victims, many trafficking or exploitation victims need encouragement to apply for jobs, and someone to talk to about what kind of job they want or could have in the future. For a person who has worked under very poor conditions, rebuilding a sense of agency, decision-making ability and self-esteem often takes time, as one interviewee noted:

(...) The phenomenon of human trafficking is often associated with the fact that it can take some time before the victims get back their sense of agency and realise that it's their life, so it's their decision; that they have an identity, and they're not just a piece of driftwood floating helplessly around with the currents. And learning and supporting long-term thinking. As in, right now, it could be more important that you take an integration course or learn Finnish instead of desperately looking for a job, any job. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 2)

Practical support in looking for jobs, introducing Finnish working life and mentoring, and guidance for employers have been provided e.g. in the Finnish Refugee Council's project presented in the info box below.

INFO BOX 3. Sauma project**Working life coaching and mentoring in the Finnish Refugee Council's Sauma project**

Since 2019, Finnish Refugee Council (FRC) has coordinated the Sauma project, funded by the Funding Centre for Social Welfare and Health Organisations (STEA), in which working life coaching is provided to migrants looking for work and information and support is provided to employers. The project collaborates with companies and its aim is to provide support at the start of the employment from recruitment to induction and until the employee has adjusted to working in Finland.¹⁶

At the time this report was drafted, the working life coaching was organised online.¹⁷ The coaching includes three meetings per week for five weeks. The person looking for work is provided help with looking for open vacancies, support for interviews, tips on making a CV, and information on working life in Finland, among other things. Working life mentors are volunteers trained by FRC who assist their mentees in drafting job applications and getting prepared for interviews, for example. The mentors also share their own professional experiences and help their mentees find activities that support them in their job hunt and strengthen their Finnish language skills.¹⁸ The coaching period is followed by a six-month support period, during which the project employees and mentors provide support in the early stages of employment for those who found a job as well as for those who have not yet found one.¹⁹

The project enables employers to advertise their open vacancies and provides support for induction training and starting the new employment as well as guidance in questions related to multicultural work communities. For example, IKEA recruits employees for their Espoo and Vantaa stores via the Sauma project courses. The coaching is in plain Finnish, which means the participants must be sufficiently proficient in Finnish, and having a valid residence permit is also a requirement.

¹⁶ <https://pakolaisapu.fi/sauma/> Accessed 17 August 2021, only in Finnish.

¹⁷ https://pakolaisapu.fi/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/Sauma_tyohakukurssi_092021-1.pdf Accessed 17 August 2021, only in Finnish.

¹⁸ <https://pakolaisapu.fi/sauma/> Accessed 17 August 2021, only in Finnish.

¹⁹ <https://pakolaisapu.fi/2019/08/01/pakolaisavun-tyollisyshanke-saumaa-yhteen-tyonantajia-ja-tyonhakijoita/> Accessed 17 August 2021, only in Finnish.

In the interviews, the representatives of victim support services called for respecting the wishes of the victims for what kind of work they want and their long-term goals when planning their employment. For example, women with a migrant background are often steered toward certain industries regardless of their educational background:

(...) Even if they have a pretty high level of education, the only career paths they're steered toward are cleaning, the restaurant industry, beauty care services (...) or the care sector. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 3)

According to the interviewed experts, significant breakthroughs have been achieved in projects promoting employment by also including goals other than those related to employment. This has enabled people who have lived in Finland a longer time to find information on possible educational paths and on the possibility of getting a decision on the recognition of a foreign higher education degree. According to an interviewed employment and social services representative, coaching focused on encouragement and information provided in a person's native language are significant factors of success, and purposefully adopting an encouraging approach is often a key factor in supporting the clients' ability to find new opportunities. According to the experts, it is also important to identify the clients' personal strengths. The following info box provides more information on such activities.

INFO BOX 4. Employment project coordinated by Integration Centre Monika**Integration Centre Monika and the Osaavat Naiset employment project**

Integration Centre Monika run by Monika – Multicultural Women’s Association Finland offers low-threshold integration services for women with an immigrant background in Helsinki, Kemi and Mikkeli. The integration services are provided under the MoniNaisten Talo -project that aims at providing a safe meeting place and communal workspace for immigrant women. Monika-Naiset also has shelter and crisis centre services designed specifically for immigrant women.²⁰

Integration Centre Monika’s services promoting employment and integration are aimed at all women needing support with them, including victims of human trafficking and labour exploitation. A combination of individual guidance in multiple languages, group activities, and mentoring is used to provide tailored support and to ensure that the client’s needs and overall situation are considered. All integration and employment services are free of charge and childcare has been arranged when needed, for example.²¹

In 2011–2016, Monika-Naiset coordinated an employment project funded by the TE Office called Osaavat Naiset ('Competent Women') that provided support and activities for promoting the employment of women migrants who have not been employed for an extended period. In the project, a guidance method for identifying a jobseeker’s competence based on their personal strengths was developed. Low-threshold group activities and guidance were provided in six languages in collaboration with operators from the public, private and third sectors. Workshops focusing on the rules of working life and applying for work in Finland were held right at the start of the project. In addition, participants were provided support with making a CV and writing job applications and with computer use. Weekly meetings and job interviews at companies in the Helsinki region helped participants create contacts with potential employers.²² In 2015–2016, more than 200 migrant women were able to enter working life through the project. Among others, city day cares, playgrounds, community centres and residential homes for the elderly as well as private companies provided employment opportunities to the participants.²³ The women found work in the service sector, retail and the restaurant sector, for example. The collaboration model developed in the project also included providing information to employers on recruiting applicants with an immigrant background as well as support and two-way cultural interpretation. (Yle 15 March 2016.)

^{20.} <https://monikanaiset.fi/blogi/moninaisten-talot-kotoutumista-kaytannossa/>. Accessed 1 July 2021, only in Finnish

^{21.} <https://monikanaiset.fi/en/integration-center-monika/>. Accessed 1 July 2021.

^{22.} <https://monikanaiset.fi/uutiset/maahanmuuttajanaiset-tyolamaan-voimavarakeskeisen-ohjauks-mallin-avulla/>. Accessed 1 July 2021, only in Finnish.

^{23.} <https://kotouttaminen.fi/-/osaavat-naiset-projekti-on-auttanut-yli-200-maahanmuuttajataustais-ta-naista-tyolamaan>. Accessed 1 July 2021, only in Finnish.

4.3. Opportunities of the intermediate labour market

Several reports have pointed out that needs for special support are not sufficiently identified when assessing ability to work and transferable skills (e.g. Aula 2016, 123). Trafficking and exploitation victims can be assessed to need special services but, like other migrants, victims of trafficking sometimes referred to services that do not correspond to their needs (Karinen et al. 2020a, 13–15). In particular, it is challenging to find services for people who cannot read and write, as well as for migrant jobseekers with a partial work ability. People with partial work ability may not be able to access services suitable for them during their integration period, even if it would be possible to assess their work ability within the integration time limits. (Karinen et al. 2020b, 24, 47.) There are also indications that there are no methods suitable for assessing the work ability of people who know very little or no Finnish, or rehabilitative services aimed at them. In addition, many of these services can only be accessed after the integration period – even if the need for them is urgent. (Ibid., 21.)

According to the experts interviewed, people in a vulnerable situation who have not been employed or have not had the capacity to be employed via the open labour market could find employment via the services of the intermediate labour market, such as rehabilitative work activities, work try-outs, pay subsidies and social enterprises. The aim of these services is to enhance the clients’ transferable skills and to increase their opportunities for finding work on the open labour market.

4.3.1. Rehabilitative work activities as a service for people with partial work ability

According to the experts interviewed, victims of trafficking can have partial work ability depending on their situation. It can be challenging to find suitable employment services for migrants with partial work ability (Karinen et al. 2020a, 25) since their position in the labour market is particularly poor. ‘Difficult’ or ‘poor’ labour market position refers to people who belong to multiple risk groups in terms of employment, such as people in rehabilitation for mental health issues, some refugees and ethnic minorities, young people without basic education or vocational education, people with substance abuse issues, people with physical disabilities, and people who have a decreased work ability or poor coping skills due to social reasons (Raivio & Nykänen 2014, 6; Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2011, 7). Based on reports and studies, many victims of trafficking can be placed in one or more of these groups. Working life is becoming increasingly demanding, which leads to a larger number of people with

a poor labour market position being left without work. Thus, they need special support to access to employment. Their employment often also requires networking and collaboration between different service providers. (Ministry of Social Affairs and Health 2011, 30.)

Rehabilitative work activities are a statutory social service governed by the Act on Rehabilitative Work (189/2001). They are aimed at people who, due to their restricted work ability or functional capacity, cannot participate in public employment services or work. According to the interviewed experts, rehabilitative work activities can help victims maintain routines and stay connected to the society as well as maintain their language skills but participating in the activities still requires at least partial work ability. One victim support representative noted that not all their clients are able to enter the public labour market immediately e.g. due to them requiring psychiatric rehabilitation, and for such clients, rehabilitative work activities or similar options are very necessary:

[According to a mental health professional] for a person with mental trauma, for example, it's better that they do something than to do nothing, and I'm sure that's true. If you can at least spend time outside your home, that already helps. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 6)

Some interviewees expressed criticism towards rehabilitative work activities. For someone aiming at finding work, the activities offer something to do for e.g. four hours once a week, and the rest of the time the person is at home, which is not optimal according to one of the interviewed employment and social services representatives.

The Act on Rehabilitative Work does not apply to people whose integration period is still on-going, which means they cannot participate in rehabilitative work activities. According to section 4 of the Act, it is not applied to persons who are entitled to have an integration plan drafted under the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010). Two of the interviewees considered this unfortunate. However, one of the two noted that people undergoing the integration process are still entitled to participate in activity-based language training. In general, the interviewees called for opportunities for combining vocational rehabilitation and language learning. These were combined in an interesting way in the Finnish Social Insurance Institution Kela's Mahku project, more information on which is in the info box below.

INFO BOX 5. Mahku project

Improving the rehabilitation services provided for immigrants (Mahku)

In the Mahku project implemented in 2015–2020, Kela's rehabilitation services were developed to meet the needs of immigrants. The project comprised three subprojects:

- Training project that provided training for Kela's service providers to promote a culturally aware approach to work and cultural competence
- Awareness project that produced information on Kela's training services in several languages for immigrants
- Services project that experimented with and developed a rehabilitation service combining vocational training and Finnish language training. (Kela 2021.)

The target group of the project that included language training and vocational training (Mahku rehabilitation) were non-Finnish/Swedish-speaking people covered by the Finnish social security system who met the criteria for Kela's vocational rehabilitation supporting integration into work (TEAK). The piloted version of the Mahku rehabilitation included up to 120 days of TEAK training and up to 48 days of Finnish language training (Varjonen et al. 2020, 10.) A separate assessment study was carried out on the project. According to the assessment, the service was considered a good way to support vocational rehabilitation. The most significant benefits observed were related to learning Finnish. Around one in ten – a total of 10 people – found paid employment or work supported with a pay subsidy. (Ibid., 26–28.) Some did not finish their rehabilitation. The most common reason for this was that the clients found it too demanding in relation to their work ability and functional capacity. (Ibid., 43.)

The Mahku project final report stated that there is a need for a service such as the piloted vocational rehabilitation. In addition, the Finnish skills of all participants improved, and many felt that the rehabilitation had increased and facilitated social interaction for them. According to service providers, vocational rehabilitation should be able to meet the needs of people with a migrant background and address, among others, mental health issues and learning difficulties better than what can be done currently. Moreover, when working with migrants, professionals should be aware of their own cultural background and the Finnish approach to rehabilitation as well as the effect these have on work. Establishing a trustworthy relationship was deemed to require time, an open mind, willingness to listen, and flexibility from the professionals. (Alanko 2020, 80–81.)

4.3.2. Work try-out as a tool for career planning

In the interviews, the opportunities provided by work try-outs for promoting the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims were also discussed. Work try-outs enable people to think about their employment plans and the possibility of returning to the labour market. Work try-outs do not incur costs to the employers and the employees receive the same (or increased) benefits as they would if they were unemployed. Work try-outs usually last up to six months. (Suomi.fi 2020.)

According to the interviewed employment and social services representatives, work try-outs are a great option when the client is goal-oriented and wants to learn something new and to show their skills to the employer. However, some clients get frustrated at being at home and will accept any position offered immediately, which is not always a positive thing, since the work try-out should relate to the client's profession or to a profession the client is interested in. In special cases, work try-outs in fields not related to the client's qualifications have been accepted, if the try-out has been deemed to promote the client's proficiency in Finnish, for example.

Employers of work try-outs are often third-sector operators or restaurants. One interviewed employment and social services representative noted that these try-outs rarely result in permanent employment even if the employers make promises to that effect during the try-out. Another interviewee also highlighted that the aim is not to have the clients engage in one work try-out after another, particularly if the try-outs take time away from searching for a permanent job:

[The client] said that they wanted to return to work, paid work, but that they never had time to apply. (...) the client always accepted a new work try-out just to have something to do, and that kind of prevented them from applying, so I had to put a stop to that. 'No more,' I told them. We're done with the try-outs, try something else next. And after I gave the client that friendly push into a new direction, things have started happening. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 7)

4.3.3. Making use of pay subsidies and job coaches

A pay subsidy is an economic benefit that the TE Office may grant to an employer to cover some of the pay of an unemployed jobseeker. The percentage of the total pay costs covered with pay subsidy (up to 50%) depends on how long the jobseeker has been unemployed.²⁴

²⁴ <https://www.te-palvelut.fi/en/employers/find-an-employee/pay-subsidy> Accessed 26 April 2022.

Many of the interviewed experts considered the pay subsidy system a good gateway for accessing employment. One employment and social services representative expressed that they hoped that employers would use pay subsidies more extensively, and another noted that in the future, companies in particular should make better use of the pay subsidy system, as it is currently mostly used by municipalities and third-sector employers. According to the expert, municipal and third-sector employers often requested clients who are entitled to the highest possible pay subsidy percentage, which depends on the period of the client's unemployment, i.e., they request people who are long-term unemployed. This means the jobs supported with pay subsidy rarely lead to true independent employment, which is why it would be important that companies would make use of the system as well.

Some social enterprises and Kierrätyskeskus [Reuse Centre] and such have employed a lot of people with pay subsidy and work try-outs. So, it's a bit challenging. Then the care sector often has a lot of those positions open, but private companies, that's another thing... They have higher requirements, that's something I've seen many times. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 9)

According to the interviewees, job mediators or coaches could also increase private companies' use of the pay subsidy system and their recruitment of migrants. As an example, the Finnish Refugee Council's Sauma project has provided working life coaching and support for employers (see info box 3). According to one interviewed employment and social services representative, job coaches can act as a mediator between a job-seeker with limited language skills and a possible employer during the recruitment process and the employment itself, helping to solve practical challenges faced by both parties. This two-way role can meet a variety of needs and the mediator could be easier to approach if problems arise. The interviewee commented:

(...) There's always that aspect of – that if you recruit someone with a migrant background, it's thought to be a risk, even if there's support for the recruitment. They think they'll be left dealing with any cultural differences or language issues alone, particularly if the possible employer is a small business. So, maybe we could offer more support to working life, be it language support or cultural training, so the entrepreneur would have access to support services to help with the recruitment. I don't know. In general, it should be talked about more. No one really talks about it, that you could hire a migrant with the support of a pay subsidy. First of all, they

don't even know that pay subsidy exists, but then the entrepreneurs also – we should raise awareness, so they don't see it quite as risky, that these are the realities and that we can figure it all out together. (Employment and social service expert – Interview 8)

The mediator could support the collaboration and communication between the person whose employment is supported with pay subsidy, the employer and the TE Office, for example. One interviewed expert also brought up that it would be useful – at least at the start of the employment – if the employee could receive some additional support from an external party in a way that would allow the person's immediate supervisor to take part in coordinating the support. However, the same interviewee also said that a person being a victim of human trafficking should not be highlighted too much:

Many want to help, but then again, we shouldn't tout it too much, that this person is a trafficking victim with all kinds of issues. I think that can make employers more hesitant to hire those people. I think it's important that we don't over-emphasise or purposefully portray the person as total social case. Most of these people are, with the tiniest amount of support, and some without any support, completely employable. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 1)

The opportunity to use the pay subsidy system could make it more appealing for employers to offer longer-term employment to migrants than only work try-outs. Organising integration and language training at workplaces instead of a classroom, and apprenticeship training have also been suggested as methods for promoting the integration and employment of immigrants. (Yle 21 January 2020.) The pay subsidy system has also been considered a good gateway to permanent employment and for networking for migrants with existing qualifications. Compared to other Nordic countries, active employment measures are utilized less in Finland. In Sweden and Denmark, 70 per cent of those covered by labour policies either take part in training, are employed with the support of a pay subsidy system or some other form of support, whereas in Finland, the corresponding percentage is 35. (Kurronen 2021, 4; referring to Alatalo et al. 2019.)

4.3.4. Social enterprises and the role of companies

One method employing people with partial work ability is to make use of social enterprises. The criteria for companies to be called 'social enterprises' are strict in Finland. They are for-profit companies just like any other company, but at least 30 per cent of their employees must have partial work ability or be long-term unemployed. To be eligible for using the term, social enterprises must also be entered in the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment's registry of social enterprises. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment n.d.; Act on Social Enterprises 1351/2003.)

However, not many social enterprises have been established in Finland, and none of them are known to currently operate specifically in employing victims of trafficking. Globally, social enterprises have been established by different parties providing support to different vulnerable groups, such as third-sector operators (e.g. Bain 2017, 83; Surtees 2012, 55). Victims have been supported for example by creating business ventures that help victims sell a variety of products, or by offering employment at the social enterprises in different roles (ibid.).

In Sweden, the public limited company Samhall AB operates on the intermediate labour market and employs around 25,000 people with partial work ability in jobs in the cleaning, logistics, and property management industries²⁵. The company's aim is that their employees transfer to new employers after gaining work experience at Samhall.

Finland's first strategy for social enterprises was published in the spring of 2021. A call for statements was held for the draft legislative proposal on a new state-owned special assignment company in the summer of 2021, and the new Act is expected to enter into force on 1 January 2022. In addition, the Finnish Government has decided to establish a competence centre focusing on providing support for social enterprises. (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment 2021a; 2021b.) Social enterprises would also provide an opportunity for trafficking and exploitation victims with partial work ability to find employment more flexibly. A solution such as this could function as a great way to find employment to people whose work ability is restricted, as one interviewed employment and social services representative stated:

They could find a sense of purpose and could experience being a part of the society, and when they are able to work, they can also get income to support themselves. And if they can work like ten hours each week, then they work the hours they can and we could find other services to support them in their individual situation (...) But I think it would be very important that – since they're setting up this

²⁵. See <https://samhall.se/> Accessed 24 June 2021.

operating model now – that trafficking victims and other people with mental trauma are considered too, and people who might not have a very realistic chance on finding employment at the open labour market any time soon. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 8)

The interviewed experts also wanted to challenge companies to shed their prejudices and to recruit and interview people with names that could indicate a migrant background or people who are not highly proficient in Finnish. According to an interviewed victim support provider, a person having been a victim of human trafficking does not need to be a significant consideration for the employer:

But hiring a trafficking victim is no different, it's no bigger a risk to the employer than hiring any other person. And I think that's how it should be, that what a person has experienced, or their background, it should not matter in any other way than that the person should be provided with enough information on the situation and their rights and, for example, they should be entitled for occupational healthcare and to take sick leave if necessary, and to get support in their situation. And of course, before their employment starts, that they would have got enough support and that their planned path would be generally humane. (Representative of an organisation providing support to victims – Interview 3)

In Finland, companies have not yet taken part in employing victims of trafficking to any significant extent. However, the background material does provide some indication of good practices related to companies. A group of Finnish companies in the restaurant sector has recently recruited trafficking and exploitation victims, thus becoming a trailblazer in addressing human trafficking in Finland. The info box below includes more information on this project focusing on finding employment for the Nepalese cooks who were victims of labour exploitation.

INFO BOX 6. Project promoting employment in the restaurant sector

Recruiting Nepalese cooks in responsible companies in the restaurant sector

In the spring of 2019, Helsingin Sanomat published an extensive article on the systematic labour exploitation being carried out in Nepalese restaurants (HS 30 March 2019). The article exposing the extraordinarily organised labour exploitation occurring in Finland garnered plenty of attention, and in the same year, three operators started an extensive project to help the Nepalese cooks. Victim Support Finland with trade union PAM, the Finnish Hospitality Association MaRa, and a group of Finnish companies (HOK-Elanto, Fazer Food Services, Sodexo Finland) started a joint project aiming at finding work for the Nepalese cooks with responsible employers (HS 8 March 2020; National Assistance System's webinar on 13 April 2021). The aim of the project was to provide as many of the Nepalese cooks as possible the opportunity to get away from the inhumane working conditions and the sphere of influence of the people who had exploited them.

The project was started by finding the migrants who still worked in Nepalese restaurants and were interested in working at a Finnish company. After finding the relevant contacts, the partner companies took over the recruitment. For example, HOK-Elanto followed their usual recruiting process for the Nepalese cooks as well; the applicants were interviewed and recruited to fulfil vacancies in the kitchens of the company's à la carte restaurants. At the start of the employment, the employers invested significantly to induction training and to allowing the new employees a period of adjustment. After the recruitment process was finished, the employer companies continued interacting with the coordinator from Victim Support Finland and found out the most effective support functions to facilitate the adjustment process. The cooks recruited as a result of the project are now appreciated members of their work community and the project provided them an opportunity to properly become members of the Finnish society. (Ibid.)

According to the partner companies, there have been more applicants than there are vacancies. In addition, some had to turn down an offered position, since the income of a full-time cook is not sufficient to meet the income requirement of their residence permit based on family ties. (HS 8 March 2020.)

According to the interviewees, victims of trafficking or exploitation that find new employment are often afraid that making a mistake at work could lead to their employment being terminated or them being penalised somehow, and thus they are afraid to ask questions when they do not understand something. Creating an open and transparent relationship between the supervisors and the employees promotes communication and understanding for both parties. According to a party providing support to victims, such support activities should primarily be based on collaboration, and employees should not be left to their own devices after the recruitment process is finished. Instead, investments should be made to ensure they adjust properly.

Many interviewees pointed out that there are plenty of jobs for which even a lower Finnish proficiency is sufficient. Therefore, companies should assess the level of Finnish proficiency required from applicants for each position as part of their recruitment process. It should be noted that there are gender disparities in the labour market, and in the sectors where women outnumber men – such as social services and healthcare, retail and customer service – proficiency in Finnish often plays a greater part (Yle 21 January 2020). Networks bringing together different employers and employees can also be an important asset in promoting the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims. StartUp Refugees is one example, the activities of which are presented in the following info box.

INFO BOX 7. StartUp Refugees

StartUp Refugees – network promoting the employment of immigrants

[StartUp Refugees](https://startuprefugees.com) is a non-profit organisation whose network consists of more than 1,000 companies, public entities and communities. Its operations include workshop-based coaching and guidance aimed at asylum seekers and migrants interested in entrepreneurship or finding employment. The organisation develops its operations by surveying the support needs, competence, and professional goals of immigrants undergoing the integration process. In its five years of operations, the network has filled 1,000 job openings, provided support to the teams of more than 300 companies in starting their business, and helped establish nearly 40 companies. In addition, during its operations, StartUp Refugees has provided thousands of training, education and networking opportunities that promote integration. The employment service promotes company participation and acts as a mediator between employers and employees. StartUp Refugees uses its own job search portal to act as a matchmaker between more than 4,700 jobseekers with varying professional profiles and companies from different sectors, such as Fazer, Aaltovoima, ISS and StaffPoint.²⁶

²⁶ <https://startuprefugees.com> Accessed 1 July 2021.

As a global example, in the Balkans, support has been offered for the entrepreneurship of trafficking victims, which is considered to provide the victims with the opportunity to improve their financial situation from the comfort of their home. (Surtees 2012, 12, 45) According to Surtees (2012, 45), entrepreneurship is not a suitable option for all victims of human trafficking, since failing at it can be detrimental both financially and mentally. Trafficking victims may not have the necessary startup capital or competence to establish a company, and some may experience such severe symptoms as a consequence of the exploitation that they are not able to handle the everyday tasks of running a business (ibid., 47–48).

4.4. Collaboration

The key in promoting the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims is close collaboration between the different parties, including the victims themselves. This collaboration is governed by legislation and the rights of access to information as well as the division of (statutory) responsibilities; the different parties must operate within the framework of these. The interviewees brought up the strict restrictions related to access to information, but also noted that confidential exchange of information is required to advance their clients' cases across administrative boundaries:

(...) the spirit of the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration is that information should be exchanged. And keeping in mind that we're thinking about what's best for our client and how to help them move forward in their life, that absolutely takes exchanging information. We're all under a confidentiality obligation anyway (...) so it's hard to understand why we're not allowed to exchange information. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 10)

The risk of a lack of collaboration is the silo effect and that referral to other services becomes more difficult if there is a lack of awareness on the competences and service selections of other operators.

There are organisations we can refer people to for like quick... But if we know that the client does not have an on-going patient relationship with a psychiatric care provider or something, then we have nothing to work with, really. After all, we're a [employment/social service provider], so we [want] people to find work, but the path to employment may not be all that simple for some people. Then we just have to figure out what the path could be. (Employment and social service expert – Interview 6)

However, according to the interviewees, the successful advancement of a client's case is often the result of good and close collaboration, which is why it should be increased and facilitated with suitable methods. The respondents to the questionnaire highlighted the importance of good and flexible collaboration, timely information exchange, personal guidance, and adopting a client-oriented approach in particular (see sections 4.1 and 4.2). Social services, TE Office, training organisations, non-governmental organisations and job coaching providers were named as parties engaged in multiagency collaboration. Organisations providing support to victims could also be included more extensively in the collaboration, since they have a lot of knowledge on human trafficking and a broad understanding on the different situations of victims.

As good practices, the respondents to the questionnaire mentioned centralising social services for trafficking victims to one municipal unit with common operational guidelines, regular meetings and practices for information sharing, and placing integration services under municipal social services, since this means that forming an overall understanding of the client's situation and coordinating the network are clearly the responsibility of a professional with a status backed up by legislation. As one interviewee stated:

Employment cannot be handled as a thing that is separate from a person's personal life; it must be considered as one part of it. Supporting integration and organising services does not only aim at finding employment. Instead, it aims at independency, participation and agency that create wellbeing and serve as bases for a good life. (...) For clients needing special support, employment services are not the whole solution for employment challenges, but they are an important partner on the client's journey to independence. They must be seen as one part of the whole. (A questionnaire respondent)

The interviewed experts also highlighted that removing needless bureaucracy and introducing flexibility are important. These would better enable promoting the employment of and providing support services for trafficking and exploitation victims compared to the current situation. One interviewee explained the issue as follows:

Collaboration between different sectors, as in, generally. Since we have the authorities and operators and organisations that offer activities that promote integration, and there are the social services and the administration. To have these talk to each other, so they could work more flexibly and engage in multi-professional and cross-administrative collaboration. It would be difficult to implement, but very much needed. But right now, it's difficult since there's a lot of administrative complexity, and people are very particular about who's responsible for what and who has the right to do what. So, in general, just being more open to each other and working together to improve our clients' lives, and to not just keep our own plates clean and work with a tunnel vision ensuring that we can tick certain boxes and say: 'I took care of this, that and those, my responsibilities are taken care of and everything is now OK'. Encouraging collaboration and removing bureaucracy. (Employment and social service representative – Interview 8)

To make collaboration easier, attention should be paid to, among other things, well-functioning information sharing methods and interoperability of different electronic systems. In addition, creating and developing networks can be used to break barriers between different operators, which can be useful in problem situations. These actions can be used to ensure that all parties have a clear overall understanding of the victims' situation and the different options available, which serves to improve the situation of the victims and facilitate their access to services.

5. Conclusions

This report analyses the employment of victims of human trafficking and labour exploitation and the challenges and opportunities associated with it through a review of previous literature and legislation as well as material collected with a questionnaire and from interviews with experts. The report was drafted as part of the IKUT project coordinated by the National Assistance System for Victims of Human Trafficking, in which services for improving the transferable skills of trafficking and exploitation victims are also assessed and developed.

Structural employment challenges

Human trafficking is a new phenomenon for many actors in the field of employment services. In Finland, victims of trafficking are covered by the general legislation on employment and the intermediate labour market, and there are no special services or service paths aimed at them. However, professionals in employment services are in a unique position to both identify victims of trafficking and exploitation and provide them with the individual support they need on their path to decent work. Awareness on human trafficking as a phenomenon varies regionally, since identified cases have so far been located at certain regions only, such as Southern Finland and Ostrobothnia. Similarly, opportunities for supporting victims' employment and the number of suitable jobs vary significantly depending on the region. Regional variation of service options results in the risk that victims of trafficking do not have equal access to the services, guidance and flexibility they need.

Based on the findings of this study, it became apparent that staff of employment services do not necessarily have sufficient time to uncover the unique situations of trafficking or exploitation victims and to meet their individual needs. The staff may also see human trafficking as a very complex issue and feel that reacting to it requires specialised knowledge and resources, when in most cases, the victim's service needs can be met with the existing services and operating practices. Disclosing experiences of exploitation can be difficult, which is why victims cannot be obligated to recount their experiences to different operators and service providers or to inform them of the possible on-going criminal investigation. Employment service providers should have clear guidelines on what their employees should do if they suspect to have met a person who is a trafficking or exploitation victim but has not yet been identified as one, or if a client tells an employee about their previous experiences of exploitation.

According to the report results, the Finnish service system is considered rigid and often unable to meet the individual needs of victims. Several structural challenges hinder supporting the employment of victims. A total of 70 per cent of the respondents to the questionnaire considered that the deficiencies in rehabilitative integration services and employment services hinder the employment of trafficking victims significantly or very significantly. For example, under current legislation, a person undergoing the integration process is not entitled to participate in rehabilitative work activities. In addition, access to many intermediate labour market services, like rehabilitative work activities or employment supported with a pay subsidy, requires that the person trying to ac-

cess them has been unemployed for a certain amount of time. According to the experts interviewed, in the case of human trafficking and labour exploitation victims, the possibilities for flexible practices that can better take into account the victims' individual situations and needs should be examined. Moreover, the victims' period of unemployment being too short should not prevent their access to the services most suited for them.

Several of the interviewed victim service providers and the respondents to the questionnaire had encountered situations where the integration time limit of a victim of trafficking or exploitation had already passed. The victims had been trapped in an exploitative situation for more than three or even five years and thus, they were no longer entitled to integration services. According to section 12 of the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration (1386/2010), at the latest, the drafting of an integration plan must be started three years after an immigrant has been granted a right of residence and, in special cases, within five years. However, victims of trafficking and labour exploitation cannot be presumed to have acquired the knowledge and skills required by the Finnish society if they have lived in circumstances where they have not had the opportunity to participate in language courses, meet Finns and get familiarised with the Finnish society, or have not even had any free time due to having to work extensive hours.

Some interviewed experts had also encountered situations where the victims had been imposed a waiting period after resigning from the job they had been exploited in. The waiting period was imposed even though there was an acceptable reason for their resignation – labour exploitation. When assessing cases, employment services should take into account that employers who exploit their employees do not necessarily give a certificate of employment to those who resign. With labour exploitation it is also important that the victim's story is taken as truth unless otherwise proven. The interviewed victim service providers had also encountered a few cases where the victims had been told by employment services to apply to work for an employer that belonged to the network of the employer that exploited them. It is clear that employment service staff require clear instructions on how such cases should be handled.

In addition, the experts interviewed brought up that the waiting periods linked to granting of residence permits and the income requirements often cause additional stress to victims. In this, the risk is that the person will accept a job with bad conditions just to be eligible for an extended or a new type of permit. In addition, the work permit of victims being sector-specific may hinder their re-employment. In certain regions

or sectors, it can be difficult to find a new job if the victim is a party to an on-going preliminary investigation related to human trafficking or extortionate work discrimination involving a specific employer. Cases such as this have occurred in the restaurant sector, for example, if a worker has applied to work for another employer that knows the employer being investigated.

Individual employment challenges

The results of this report indicate that victims of trafficking and exploitation are a heterogeneous group, and their individual service needs must be considered. Some victims are ready to be re-employed and work full-time immediately, while some are only partially able to work. This can be a consequence of exploitation or violence and mental trauma as well as of a lack of work experience or education and training.

According to the interviewed experts, the victims' ability to work can also vary with time. For example, an on-going criminal procedure causes stress to victims periodically, or the victims may be required to go in for questioning or court sessions during which they cannot participate in (integration) training or work full-time. Therefore, more flexibility is required for the different paths leading back to working life. In addition, employment services should have more information on the impact of human trafficking, mental trauma, exploitation and violence, the possible effects these have on the work ability of victims, as well as how victims can best be supported and how the factors causing them stress can be taken into account. For example, the traditional sanctions of not granting benefits or reducing their amount may not work on this group of people, since the challenges they face in relation to participation in integration or employment activities are often a result of the exploitation they have experienced.

According to the interviewed experts, victims of labour exploitation can have a very distorted view of working life and employees' rights in Finland, since they have been given false information by the employer who exploited them. This is supported by the questionnaire results: 68 per cent of the respondents felt that a lack of knowledge on employees' rights and labour legislation have a very significant effect on whether a person falls victim of labour exploitation again. More than half of the respondents felt that the lack of a support network (60%), the need to send money back to their home country (52%), and lack of relevant language skills (52%) also very significantly increase the risk re-victimisation. The experts expressed similar views in the interviews.

In particular, use of online systems, lack of relevant language skills, mistrust towards authorities and the authorities' roles not being clear hinder the victims' interaction with employment services. Building trust and providing practical guidance are particularly important at the start of the client relationship. In addition, it is vital that the client is explained e.g. what information they must give and why, and on what grounds they are entitled or not entitled to different services or benefits. Not all of the clients can use digital services, so the possibility to reserve enough time for appointments with them is also important for ensuring the matters requiring the use of digital services can be handled together during the appointment. Increased knowledge, civic skills and transferable skills strengthen the sense of agency of trafficking and labour exploitation victims and help prevent them ending up in situations of exploitation again.

New paths to working life

The services of the intermediate labour market are designed to address long-term employment, but according to the experts interviewed, the opportunities they provide could be used more extensively as a gateway to working life for trafficking and exploitation victims with partial work ability. There are many rehabilitation options, such as the rehabilitative work activities and social rehabilitation organised by municipalities and the vocational rehabilitation by the Finnish Social Insurance Institution (Kela). The journey to decent work can be long for a trafficking or exploitation victim with a low level of education and who has not been able to learn any Finnish or Swedish during their time in Finland. According to the interviewed employment services representatives, the services of the intermediate labour market or methods based on individual needs combining integration, language learning, and work flexibly would be particularly useful for persons who have had difficulties finding work on the open labour market thus far.

The pay subsidy system and job coaching could also be used more in supporting the employment of victims of trafficking and exploitation. A job coach can act as a mediator between the employee and the employer and help them navigate different situations. The collaboration between non-governmental organisations, social partners and companies to help the exploited restaurant cooks is a great practical example on how networks of different actors can be used to facilitate access to the labour market. This report also includes short descriptions of other projects implemented by different organisations including collaboration with com-

panies, for example. Globally, there are also examples of how socially responsible companies can employ trafficking victims and offer them traineeships.

Finally, the opportunities of multiagency collaboration in supporting the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims cannot be highlighted enough. Addressing the situation of victims in a comprehensive manner requires good collaboration and information sharing between different authorities. The service needs of trafficking victims vary, and some can thrive with relatively little support – but each case and person are unique. Collaboration of non-governmental organisations and other actors can provide the victims with new opportunities for individual guidance, peer support, language learning, and other activities that help them move forward from the exploitation into fair employment.

Recommendations

The general aim of these recommendations is to support the employment of trafficking victims, to promote their recovery, and to reduce the risk of re-victimisation. In practice, these goals can be promoted by increasing the awareness of authorities on human trafficking as a phenomenon and its effects by providing employment services guidance on how to better take into account the individual service needs of victims in the overall service system. In addition, it is important that the ministries, such as the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment, steering authorities with performance management duties ensure that the relevant operators have the resources they need. The recommendations are grouped into ten subthemes.

Employment services

1 Training on human trafficking must be provided for the staff of employment services, such as employees of TE Offices and local government pilots on employment. This training must be made structural to ensure that the organisations' human trafficking competence is not dependent on specific persons. Larger cities could also have employees who specialise in issues related to human trafficking and labour exploitation. Increasing awareness and creating practical guidelines can help ensure equal access to services for victims. This recommendation supports the implementation of action 22 of Finland's National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.

2 The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment should draft guidelines for employment services on handling cases involving victims of trafficking or cases where an employee suspects a client is a trafficking victim. The guidelines must include basic information on interacting with trafficked persons (incl. threats to their safety), the victims' rights to services and the authorities' responsibility to inform the victims of the services available to them and to refer them to the services. In addition, the guidelines must provide information on how the TE Office can support victims in practice, how they can help prevent re-victimisation, and how they

should take the victims' possible mental trauma and other factors affecting the victims' work ability into account in their work.

3 Employees of the TE Office and local government pilots on employment must be provided with sufficient resources that allow them to reserve enough time for client appointments with persons requiring special support, such as victims of trafficking and exploitation. There should also be enough resources to meet with the same client more frequently, particularly at the start of the client relationship.

4 Regular training on the effects of labour exploitation and mental trauma on a person's functional capacity and service needs must be organised for employees of the TE Office and local government pilots on employment. The practices of professionals working in integration and employment must take into account the fact that some clients suffer from mental trauma. For example, a traumatised client may need more flexibility since their functional capacity can vary. This must also be taken into account in the design and content of training.

5 Pilot projects related to the cross-sectoral joint service promoting employment

(TYP service) must be set up so that the victims of trafficking who need the service have access to it without the period of unemployment required by current legislation. The TYP service can be used as a method for providing cross-sectoral support for the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims, since the service package is planned in collaboration by the municipality, the TE Office and the Finnish Social Insurance Institution (Kela). TYP services can include public employment services, social and healthcare services, and rehabilitation services according to the client's needs. Currently, for a client to be eligible for the TYP service, they must be long-term unemployed (at least 6–12 months, depending on the person's age). Alternatively, the local government pilots on employment could collect information on alternative service packages and develop cross-sectoral paths to employment that would replace the TYP service.



Integration services

6 In the reform of the Act on the Promotion of Immigrant Integration, the time limit on the eligibility for integration services must be removed for cases involving a person who has not been able to access integration services due to being subject to trafficking or labour exploitation. A victim of trafficking or exploitation cannot be expected to have integrated into the Finnish society within the meaning of the Act and in its time limits, if they have been subject to labour exploitation and have not had a realistic opportunity to acquire the knowledge and skills required in the Finnish society. This recommendation supports the implementation of action 21 of Finland's National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.

7 The integration plan must be as individual and flexible as possible. Trafficking and exploitation victims whose mental wellbeing is compromised and who suffer from mental trauma must be provided, for example, rehabilitation or flexible ways to complete integration training, if they are not able to start the integration process with the regular schedule or intensity. If necessary, more extensive support or special services should be provided in connection with the integration training and other integration activities to trafficking victims. There should also be the possibility to involve a psychiatric nurse or other health care professional in the drafting of the integration plan and service need assessment when required.



Waiting period

8 Clear guidelines must be drafted for the TE Office on the application of the provisions on the waiting period in cases with reason to suspect the client is a victim of labour exploitation. Being exploited is an acceptable reason for terminating employment according to current legislation, but the TE Office should accept the victim's statement on the situation as primary evidence in situations where, in order to avoid a waiting period, the victim is expected to provide proof that their resignation or termination of employment is based on justifiable grounds. People who have been subject to labour exploitation rarely have any written documentation on the poor work conditions and they are not obligated to file a criminal report, for example²⁷. A statement from e.g. a party providing support to victims could be used to supplement the victim's own statement.

²⁷ For example, according to section 54b of the amendment to the Aliens Act that entered into force on 1 October 2021, a victim of labour exploitation can be granted an extended permit for one year without any sectoral restrictions or income requirements if their employer's conduct has been improper. According to the related Government Proposal, the experience of labour exploitation does not need to be verified in a criminal investigation nor is a decision from a court required. Acquiring proof on the suspected significant negligence or exploitation on an employer's part is often difficult. Thus, the Government Proposal states that a written statement or verbal account of the victim should be considered as sufficient proof for granting the extended permit, if their account includes sufficient details indicating exploitation. (HE 253/2020 v.p.)

Rehabilitation

9 Social rehabilitation under the Social Welfare Act (1301/2014) should be used as a method for providing support for trafficking and exploitation victims and their return to working life when necessary, even though social rehabilitation is not an employment promotion activity in principle. Social rehabilitation could include group or individual activities according to the client's needs that increase the client's transferable skills. Activities can also be organised as local collaboration, for example with multicultural associations or other key operators. In Pori, for example, social rehabilitation has been used as a gateway to rehabilitative work activities.

10 Victims of human trafficking must have access to a support person under the Social Welfare Act. Activities carried out with the support person are not directly related to employment

but can indirectly increase a victim's transferable skills and work ability. The support person can also attend appointments with the client, help prepare for them, and help with following up on the appointments after them. This contributes to the client learning about their rights and obligations related to the integration process and employment.

11 Municipal employment services must pilot individual low-threshold programmes that provide opportunities for tailored support and rehabilitation and gateways for entering the intermediate labour market, for example. The support provided by employment services is not always sufficient for improving a trafficking victim's self-esteem and competence, or for meeting their individual needs for services. For example, in the previously mentioned project for improving the rehabilitation services provid-

ed for immigrants (see info box 5) implemented by the Finnish Social Insurance Institution, rehabilitation services targeted specifically at immigrants were piloted. The piloted services combined vocational rehabilitation with language training and enhanced the transferable skills of the participants as well as their knowledge on working life in Finland. These projects must be supported with targeted project funding.

12 The Act on Rehabilitative Work (189/2001) must be amended to allow people undergoing the integration process to participate in rehabilitative work activities if necessary without having their integration period interrupted. The current Act is not applied to people undergoing the integration process. Rehabilitative work activities can be used as a tool for supporting the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims.

Pay subsidy

13 The TE Office and municipalities must increase the use of the pay subsidy system to support the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims and reserve sufficient funds for this. Based on previous studies, the pay subsidy system is an effective method for supporting the employment of persons with a migrant background.



14 The TE Office and municipalities must be able to better ensure that companies that have been previously found to exploit their employees cannot make use of the pay subsidy or work try-out systems. According to chapter 7, section 3 of the Act on Public Employment and Business Service (916/2012), pay subsidy is not granted to an employer that has neglected its obligations to pay taxes or statutory fees. According to section 187 of

the amended Aliens Act that entered into force on 1 October 2021, pay subsidy must also not be granted to companies related to which a decision has been made to refrain from issuing a residence permit for an employed person. No first residence permits for employed persons are granted for up to six months to non-Finnish workers intending to work for the employer that is subject to the decision. (HE 253/2020 vp.)

Job coaching

15 The TE Office must increase the use of job coaching since it enables providing individual support to trafficking and exploitation victims. The coaches must receive training on working with victims of human trafficking and labour exploitation. If necessary, designated coaches should be assigned regionally for supporting victims specifically. The coach can also help address employers' needs during recruitment and the employment itself and provide support in any challenges that may arise. Sufficient resources must be reserved for this activity.

People with partial work ability

16 Employment services must better identify the service needs of trafficking and exploitation victims with partial work ability and the victims must be referred to services that meet their needs and aim at employment in the long term. Opportunities must be ensured for combining and promoting integration, employment and the acquisition of practical everyday language skills more efficiently compared to the current level. In this, the opportunities of the intermediate labour market, such as workshops, should be made use of.

17 The special assignment company to be established in Finland in 2022 (cf. Samhall Ab in Sweden) should also employ trafficking and exploitation victims with partial work ability, since their labour market position is poor. Providing work and sufficient support will allow the victims to increase their transferable skills, language skills and other competencies, which will increase their opportunities to find employment under other employers in the future. The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment should consider this in the operational planning of the company.

Increasing the awareness of employees

18 Municipalities and the TE Office must organise low-threshold guidance services and training for jobseekers with a migrant background on employees' rights and the practices of Finnish working life, among other things. Content of this kind should also be included in integration training. In the organisation of the training, attention should be paid to the fact that the jobseekers are a heterogeneous group of people with different levels of language and information searching skills and different information needs. Existing materials should be taken advantage of, such

as Victim Support Finland's [video](#)²⁸ and the [Working in Finland](#) brochure that are available in several different languages. This recommendation supports the implementation of action 6 of Finland's Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.

19 The TE Office, the Occupational Safety and Health Administration, and other authorities must instruct any trafficking victims they meet in the course of their work to apply for an extended permit granted based on an employer's improper conduct

(Aliens Act 301/2004, section 54b). Since 1 October 2021, a person who has worked in Finland based on a residence permit for an employed person and who is a victim of labour exploitation has been able to apply for a one-year extended permit to find new employment or to become self-employed. The permit does not have any sectoral restrictions or income requirements.

²⁸⁾ [The animation on employees' rights in Finland](#) is available in 16 languages.

Role of companies

20 The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment must increase the role of companies in promoting the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims in collaboration with employment services. The joint project of Victim Support Finland, HOK Elanto, trade union PAM, the Finnish Hospitality Association MaRa and Sodexo offering employment in responsible companies in the restaurant sector to the Nepalese cooks that were victims of labour exploitation is a good example of such activity. This recommendation supports the implementation of action 44 of Finland's National Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.

21 The Ministry of Economic Affairs and Employment must enhance the prevention and discovery of human trafficking and exploitation of migrant workers in collaboration with employer's associations. In recent years, HEUNI has published several guidelines and practical tools that companies can use to uncover and address labour exploitation. In addition, the busi-

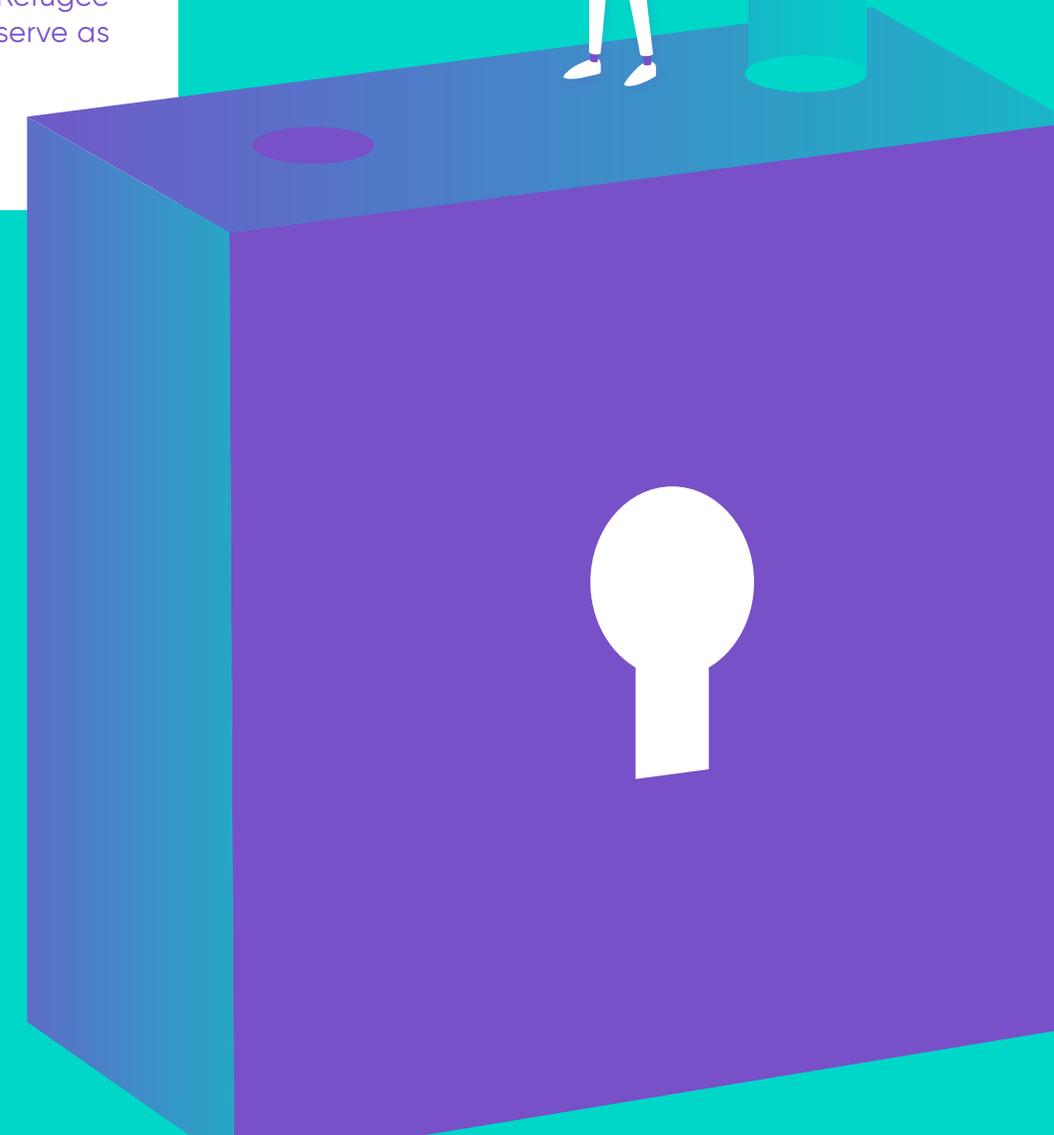
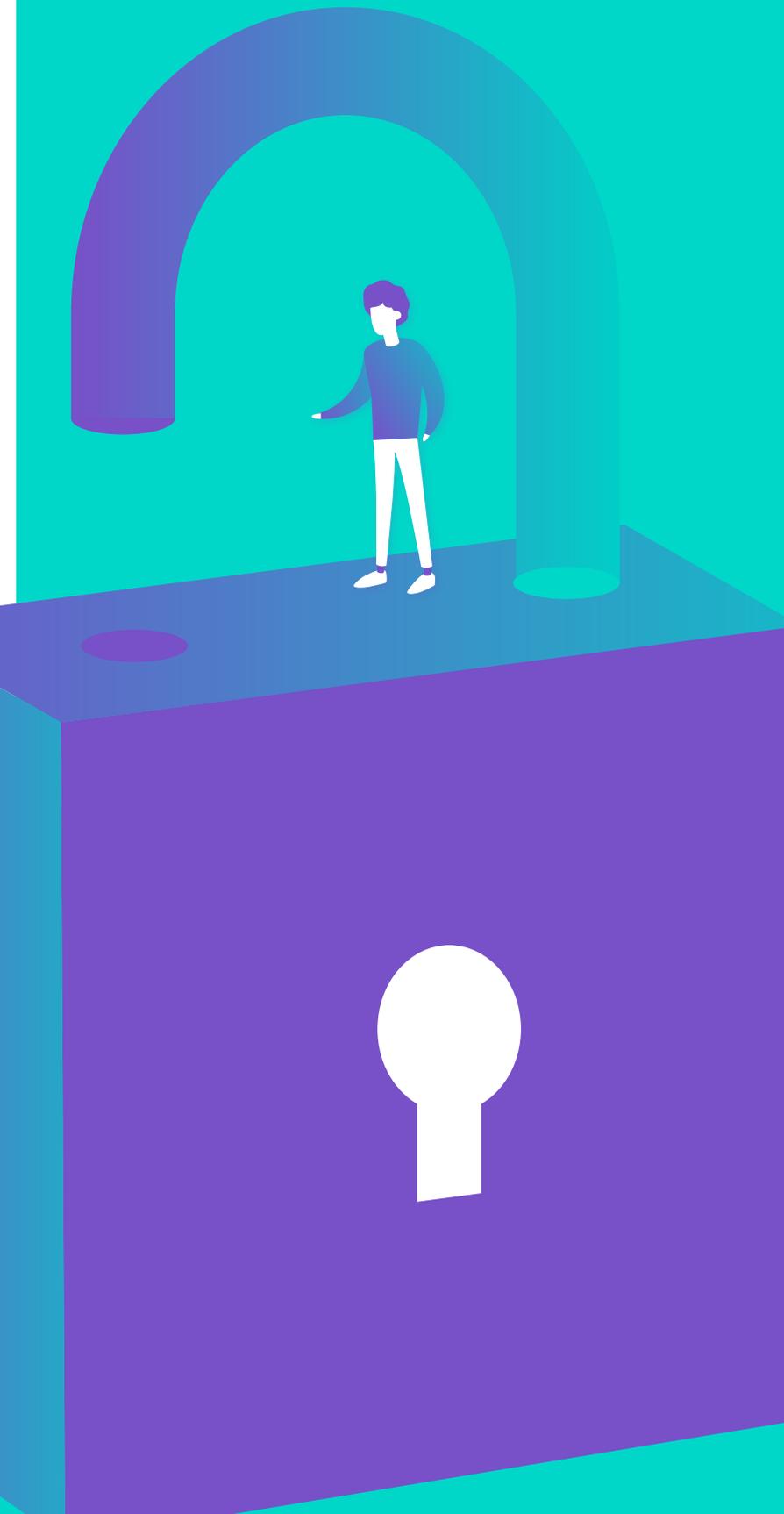
ness sparring provided in connection with the IKUT project is a good example. This recommendation supports the implementation of actions 44 and 45 of Finland's Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.

22 Municipalities, Centres for Economic Development, Transport and the Environment, and the TE Office must develop local networks and projects bringing employers and jobseekers together in collaboration with non-governmental organisations and other local operators. This can be an important method for increasing interaction between employers and jobseekers and creating paths for victims of trafficking and exploitation to find decent employment. Among others, the Osaavat Naiset project of Integration Centre Monika, the Sauma project of the Finnish Refugee Council and the StartUp Refugees network serve as great examples.

Collaboration

23 Municipalities must increase multiagency collaboration and information sharing between municipal services for migrants, local government pilots on employment, the TE Office, social and healthcare services, and the third sector. This may contribute to designing tailored paths for victims of trafficking and exploitation into working life and facilitate identifying their particular needs and meeting them. This recommendation supports the implementation of action 43 of Finland's Action Plan against Trafficking in Human Beings.

24 Government and municipal authorities, the third sector and companies must continue developing multi-professional and cross-administrative collaboration to support the employment of trafficking and exploitation victims. Tearing down silos, reducing bureaucracy, ensuring efficient information sharing, and open dialogue are methods that can be used to improve the status of victims and facilitate their access to services, since they ensure all the professionals have a clearer overall understanding of the victims' circumstances and the different options available.





Services during integration period

Jobseeker's independent study
(supported by unemployment benefit)

Specialized services
For persons with deteriorated work capacity/functioning

Integration training

Literacy training

Integration plan

Initial assessment

Local government pilots on employment/ TE services / Municipalities

Rehabilitation
For persons with deteriorated work capacity has or who are at risk of incapacity for work due to illness or disability
Social, vocational or medical rehabilitation

Pay subsidy
For unemployed jobseekers with shortcomings in professional competence

Work try-outs
To clarify vocational and career choice options or to support return to the job market
Duration may not exceed 12 months

Job search training, work training and career coaching
To improve employability skills
To clarify vocational guidance and career options

Advice on job search

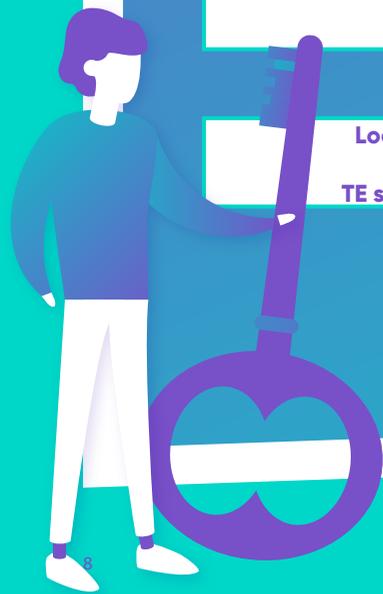
General counselling and advice
How to apply for trainings, how to use TE-service portals etc.

Services after integration period

Rehabilitative work activities
Intended for those who have been unemployed for a longer period of time or have limited functioning
Activation plan

The cross-sectoral joint service promoting employment (TYP services)
Access to services provided by different authorities on a one-stop-shop basis for jobseekers in need

Local government pilots on employment/ TE services / Municipalities



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