

N E X T S T E P S

PROJECT REPORT 2021-2023



INTO THE GREEN LIGHT



ELENA'S STORY

Elena, a 34 years old Romanian woman, has recently exited exploitation. She was exploited since the age of 15 when she was manipulated and coerced by her partner and his parents to practice forced prostitution in Romania and abroad. For years Elena tried to escape this abusive relationship and create a safer environment for her and her daughters but was unsuccessful as the trafficker leveraged control of their children to manipulate her to stay. After finally managing to escape the trafficker and his family, Elena called the police to report the abuse. Partners in the police reached out to IJM and asked for support with the case.

“ Hello, my name is Elena, and I would like to tell you a few words about the changes this project has made to my life and my girls. A year and 8 months ago, I was in Bucharest with my girls, I had a few tens of lei in my wallet, and I was one day away from sleeping on the street. Through the help of IJM I was brought to Oradea with my girls, here I received shelter, food, clothes and emotional support. This was of great support and progress, given the situation I was in before I got to know this organization (Next Steps in Oradea). I am also thankful for the fact that I am employed and part of this team. In the past year I developed skills I did not know I had, especially in tailoring! To me, the Dorcas project had a positive impact on my life in many ways, including my financials, my sense of morality, and mentally. After participating in the program for two years, I felt a greater sense of belonging in society and a greater ability to handle things on my own, with the knowledge that there are people who would step in to help if I ever needed it. Over time, this effort has aided me in finding employment. Furthermore, I believe I'm not alone in saying this.”

*Elena is not her real name

Main Achievements - Challenges & Learnings

Prevention activities: We organized prevention activities that reached more people than targeted for 2022 and 2023. Both, Salvation Army and Betania have developed creative prevention materials that can be used for future Awareness Raising Campaigns. The prevention video is one big achievement.

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

Refugee support: Refugees could be supported immediately in 2022 as EOM made funds available to support Next Steps in this unexpected/new intervention. It also brought new opportunities for awareness raising on Loverboys.

Supported cases: By the end of the project 92 women from prostitution/victims of human trafficking were assisted and 15 women from vulnerable background received support towards reintegration, through the work of Next Steps partners. The number of cases that received support at Betania, Salvation Army or through referrals of IJM to partners is higher than expected, a total of 37 women reintegrated. This is probably because the strong networks developed through this Next Steps program. From the collaboration in Netherlands, seven cases have been completed.

Covid-19: The epidemic caused challenges for both staff and beneficiaries. Several people from the staff were on sick leave because of Covid-19, which delayed activities. Many of the beneficiaries were infected with Covid-19, those were offered food packages at the door and counselling by phone.

War in Ukraine: The events happening in Ukraine, challenged the development of new activities and projects aimed at helping refugees and preventing human trafficking among them, through social assistance regarding needs and prevention activities.

Staff capacity: During the whole project period, it remained challenging to find competent staff, and to invest in development of staff to prepare them to work with victims of human trafficking.



Progress & Achievements

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

PILLARS

1

Offering perspective to recovery & access to aftercare

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

2

Justice System Transformation

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

3

Addressing root causes via prevention and reducing vulnerability

Expertise in prevention programming and targeting self-esteem and building empowerment among vulnerable groups. Raising awareness on human trafficking and sexual exploitation among vulnerable groups and professionals.

Results

August 2021 - December 2023

The collaboration in the second year of the Next Steps project was strengthened and the project is developing more. During 2023, Next Steps project continued with social assistance and vocational training for victims and vulnerable women, meanwhile working also on Advocacy and Raising Awareness on the issue of Human Trafficking. The situation in Romania changed a lot on 24th February 2022 as the war in Ukraine started. This caused a big influx of refugees and need for emergency response to attend the needs, for example at the shelter in Oradea. Besides the Covid-19 situation in Romania, from 2021, affected the participation of people in the organised activities.

Pillar 1

By the end of the project, 92 women who were victim of prostitution or other forms of human trafficking were assisted and 15 women from vulnerable background received support towards reintegration, through the work of Next Steps partners.

In 2023, the sewing project in Oradea developed through the Next Steps collaboration with Salvation Army Netherlands shops. We work on orders and can provide income to 5 Romanian women and 6 Ukrainian refugees. This is of great support for these women to sustain themselves and their families.

Pillar 2

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

During the past three years, Next Steps has made significant progress towards project activities of engaging law enforcement and understanding the training needs of criminal justice system actors, supporting victims of trafficking and promoting collaborative casework. IJM has supported

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

Pillar 3

The prevention movie was recorded through Next Steps project and presented 4 times in the Cinema and at 10 high school classes in Oradea. The feedback from both teachers and students was very positive, each time after presenting the movie there were fruitful discussions on the topic of preventing exploitation. It is our belief that through this instrument the local communities develop social responsibility, and situations of trafficking can be prevented.

Pillar 1

Assistance towards socio-economical reintegration for victims of human trafficking and women who want to exit prostitution

Indicator	Target	Results	Remarks
Nr. people have access to a Step Out program (i.e. access to needed services).	50	107	46 women from prostitution were assisted in Oradea, 33 victims of human trafficking received support through IJM, 13 women received support towards exiting prostitution through Salvation Army. 15 women from vulnerable background received support towards reintegration. New beneficiaries joined through outreach in Bucharest and referrals. During this project, the shelter in Oradea offers housing for both victims of human trafficking and refugees.
Nr. of volunteers are motivated and involved in activities (Bucharest + Oradea).	60	58	Volunteers are involved in safety net building through spending time together with beneficiaries from both pillar 1 and pillar 3 for study, free time activities, parenting activities.
Outreach in Oradea	70	5	Because of safety questions for staff and beneficiaries the outreach is delayed until the security officer and measures are in place.
Outreach in Bucharest	335	224	Salvation Army offered support to over 161 woman and 46 children through the Woman-to-Woman Christmas Campaign in 2023.
Nr. of conferences for capacity building for local staff and others	2	4	On 18 and 23 October 2023 four screenings were organized in rented cinema halls, catering to various audiences including teaching staff, educators from two universities and three high schools, school psychologists, personnel from the National Anti-Drug Agency (DGASPC), actors, involved staff, directors, prospective project partners, volunteers, beneficiaries, foster carers, friends, and refugees. We reached over 200 people for capacity building and raising awareness.
Nr. of conferences for capacity building	42	21	There were 11 victims and women from prostitution that participated at vocational trainings through Next Steps in Romania (Oradea and Bucharest) in 2023.

Pillar 2

Justice System Transformation

Indicator	Target	Results	Remarks
Nr. of conferences conducted on Legal support for local authorities.	3	3	<p>IJM organized three conferences aimed at increasing law enforcement capacity in responding to human trafficking: 1) Building a Collaborative Criminal Justice Response to Trafficking in Persons in Romania Conference; 2) Multidisciplinary training aimed at police officers and prosecutors, social workers and ANITP staff from Bucharest region; 3) The European Cross-Border Conference “Enhancing Cross-Border Collaboration to Combat Trafficking in Human Beings”. The conference brought together police officers, prosecutors, national referral coordinators, embassy representatives and international experts from primary source and destination countries in Europe - specifically Romania, Bulgaria, Hungary, Poland, UK, Germany, the Netherlands, and the US.</p> <p>Additionally, IJM was invited to deliver training to law enforcement official during a TIP Hackathon organized by EMPACT.</p>
Nr. of participants	80	192	
Nr. of conferences conducted on Legal support for local authorities. (Refugee project)	2	3	<p>IJM organized several regional conferences entitled “Responding to The Ukrainian Refugee Crisis with A Safe and Educated Approach That Helps Prevent Human Trafficking” that aimed to facilitate communication between state institutions and NGOs, as well as spreading information related to the prevention of human trafficking among Ukrainian citizens. The conferences took place in November 2022 in Bucharest, September 2023 in Suceava and in November 2023 in Timisoara.</p>
Nr. of participants	30	34	
Nr of refugees supported (Refugee project)	550	1500	<p>IJM’s offered direct support or referred to services to ensure safety, legal protection, mental wellbeing, social support, economic empowerment or legal support. These direct interactions with Ukrainian groups or communities have allowed IJM to identify risk factors, emerging trends and to develop strategies related to prevention, protection and intervention in potential cases of trafficking.</p>

Indicator	Target	Results	Remarks
Nr. strategic partnerships established	0	4	IJM has protocol agreements in place with police, prosecution, national agency against trafficking and social services. Moreover, IJM engaged other actors such as the Netherlands Embassy in Romania, International Organization for Migration and other NGOs in anti-trafficking space (People to People).
Nr. of referral cases	12	24	IJM, alongside partners, has offered support to nine victims of trafficking during 2023. Victims that were supported are young women residing in the north and east side of Romania, who were recruited in Romania and trafficked both internally and to other countries of destination.



Pillar 3

Prevention of human trafficking through Raising Awareness Campaigns and Social Assistance for women from vulnerable background.

Indicator	Target	Results	Remarks
Nr. of people targeted for awareness raising and prevention activities (Oradea)	800	1280	Prevention activities continued reaching 1280 people in Oradea during the three-year project period.
Nr. of people targeted for awareness raising and prevention activities. (Bucharest)	800	2644	Prevention activities continued reaching 1266 people through Salvation Army in Bucharest in 2023.
Nr. of people targeted for awareness raising and prevention activities. (Oradea, refugee project)	380	121	These are the refugees that participated in the screening of the movie 18th October 2023 in Oradea. The movie was finished later, we continue with sharing the movie offline and online in 2024.
Nr. of people targeted for awareness raising and prevention activities by IJM (Refugee project)	100	0	Awareness raising happened during the support of the 1500 refugees (by IJM under pillar 2). Many of the refugees supported did receive information about protection against human trafficking risks.
Nr of people targeted for awareness raising and prevention activities online (Refugee project)	5000	490.000	Salvation Army Romania had several Prevention and Raising Awareness Campaigns "Pericole online", "Noi nu suntem de vanzare", "Jobs to good to be true" presented both online and offline. The online Raising Awareness Campaigns reached 490.000 people in 2 weeks, which demonstrate how anxious are people to find a job in Europe. The campaign was in the online environment (FB, Instagram.) This was the reach of the 3 adds that SA uploaded (agriculture, dishwasher, factory).
Nr. of Teenagers involved in Life Skills development (Oradea)	55	22	Volunteers were involved in holding parenting classes for the mothers that are beneficiaries in the project. 18 parents attended during 2023
Nr. of Teenagers involved in Life Skills development (Bucharest)	0	194	Salvation Army organized Life Skills trainings at Youth Camps and during visits at Youth Programs.

Indicator	Target	Results	Remarks
Nr. of caretakers involved in Parenting classes (Oradea)	45	33	Volunteers were involved in holding parenting classes for the mothers that are beneficiaries in the project. 18 parents attended during 2023
Nr. of active safety nets	3	3	Betania developed a safety net for beneficiaries from both Pillar 1 and Pillar 3 with meetings on different topics.
Nr. of active safety nets (Refugees project)	2	2	A safety net is developed by organising activities for women and teenagers. In this the refugees also discuss safety related issues and integration in Romania.
Nr of people involved in VTC	80	74	Beneficiaries both from Salvation Army and Betania participated at vocational training courses as a prevention activity.
Nr of people involved in VTC (refugee project)	15	21	Refugees participated at sewing courses at Betania to develop new skills towards social reintegration.

Project evaluation

The project evaluation (done Q2-3 2023) showed that we laid a good foundation for expanding cooperation in recent years. We were already active in Romania before this project but did not know each other yet. Thanks to this project all organizations know each other's strengths, refer to one other and use each other's knowledge in regards to the prevention of human trafficking and care for victims (also in the Netherlands). The evaluation furthermore concluded that despite Covid-19 and the events in Ukraine all partners successfully managed to adjust quickly to the new demands in work, implemented new activities and achieved some unplanned outcomes.

The number of people willing to return (from the Netherlands to Romania) turned out lower than expected. The reasons for this were: (even worsened in Romania due to the situation during

lockdowns in Romania) the stable situation in the Netherlands and difficulty to trust the Romanian law system. Next Steps is pleased with reaching over the targets and making big progress in networking and collaboration with the local government.

The first Next Steps collaboration project finished in December 2023, but the work needs to continue. There are a lot of victims of human trafficking and women from vulnerable background that need support, a society that needs to grow in awareness to prevent and react properly to situations of trafficking and law enforcement needs support in fighting against human trafficking. All organisations continue to work within this subject and focus on projects to prevent and support victims of human trafficking from 2024 onwards.

Financial report

	Project budget	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Actuals	Difference
	Total	2021	2022	2023	Total	Total
Staff costs	€ 128,961	€ 20,628	€ 46,973	€ 51,267	€ 118,868	€ 10,093
General cost/ activities	€ 7,979	€ 248	€ 2,731	€ 3,520	€ 6,499	€ 1,480
Pillar 1. Offering perspective to recovery, access to aftercare	€ 43,371	€ 5,267	€ 25,619	€ 19,853	€ 50,739	€ -7,368
Pillar 2. Justice System Transformation	€ 54,577	€ 3,405	€ 35,666	€ 14,739	€ 53,810	€ 767
Pillar 3. Addressing root causes via prevention and reducing vulnera- bility	€ 6,010	€ 1,239	€ 2,571	€ 2,880	€ 6,690	€ -680
Prevention among Ukrainian refugees	€ 29,001	€ -	€ 5,437	€ 23,752	€ 29,189	€ -188
Subtotal	€ 269,899	€ 30,787	€ 118,997	€ 116,011	€ 265,795	€ 4,104
Other cost + Ad- min	€ 47,018	€ 14,625	€ 11,031	€ 15,371	€ 41,027	€ 5,991
Exchange rate differences			€ -207	€ -347	€ -554	€ 554
Total	€ 316,917	€ 45,412	€ 129,821	€ 131,035	€ 306,268	€ 10,649

Together we can do more

Synergy between the four organizations of Next Steps

Mutual trust as a solid foundation

- Shared strong motivation to help (vulnerable) women
- Shared goal

Effective supply chain approach

- We complement each other.
- Good referral options.
- In the field of prevention, added value by working in neighbourhoods. Now more attention is paid to (early) detection and it is possible to track down perpetrators.
- Legal support: added value in our rehabilitation programs.

Sharing knowledge and learning from each other

Added value when organizing conferences

- More authority as an organizing network than when we organize a conference as 1 organization.
- Added knowledge from the partners can be used in the design of conferences: different topics can therefore be placed on the agenda of the conferences.
- More participants that we can invite because we merge the networks of the different organizations.

The collaboration helps us with the positioning

Collectively more exposure

- To women who might want to step out.
- Towards healthcare providers who can therefore point more women to our joint offer.
- Towards (potential) donors.

Added value for external donors such as foundations and government grants

Active involvement of the Dutch partners helps the Romanian partners to further develop Next Steps and vice versa

Perspective of expansion

- Within the countries where we already work (possible nationwide coverage throughout Romania).
- As well as to the countries where we are already individually but where we are not yet working together as Next Steps (other (Eastern) European countries).



Often times, women we work with come from poor countries. There is a lack of perspective and basic needs. We provide aid for people in need and hopeless situations.



In our work we meet many Romanian women who work in prostitution in Amsterdam. We see their struggle and help them in personal situations. We stand by them every day. We assist in exit-programs and help them to dream again.

**We
are
Next
Steps**



In our work within prostitution we meet many Romanian women in our special livingrooms that are trapped in prostitution. We are an international organisation, we activate our network in order to help people in need.



IJM

To report against your trafficker is not easy and asks for long-term investment. We are an international organisation and we partner with authorities to combat trafficking, slavery, and violence against women and children.